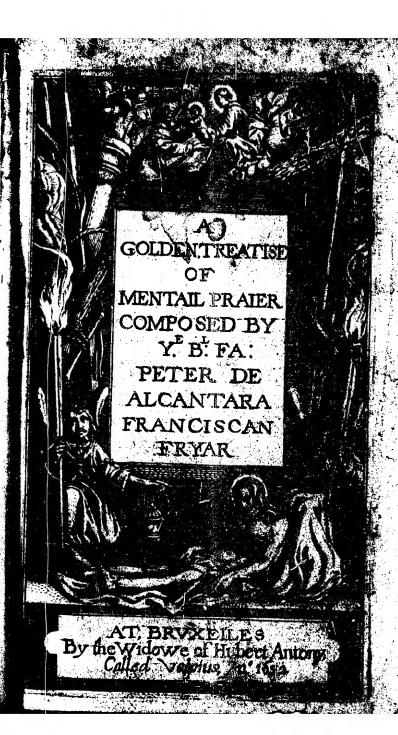
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Verus ferms Dei F. PETRVS DE ALCANTARA Hifp. Ordinis Menor de Obferu. S. P. Franc. Difeal. fund. Prov. S. Ioseph, à qua plutes alsa demanarunt, ac P. Spiritualis B. M. Terefia de lefu.

GOLDEN TREATISE

MENTALL PRAIER,

With diverse spiritual rules and directions no lesse profitable then necessarie for all sortes of people.

First composed by the venerable and blessed Father, FR. PETER DE ALCANTARA, of the Seraphicall Order of S. Francis. Beatified the 18. of Aprill. 1622.

Translated into English by G. VV.

To vohich is prefixed a breife relation of the life, and death of the same Father voritten by G.VV.

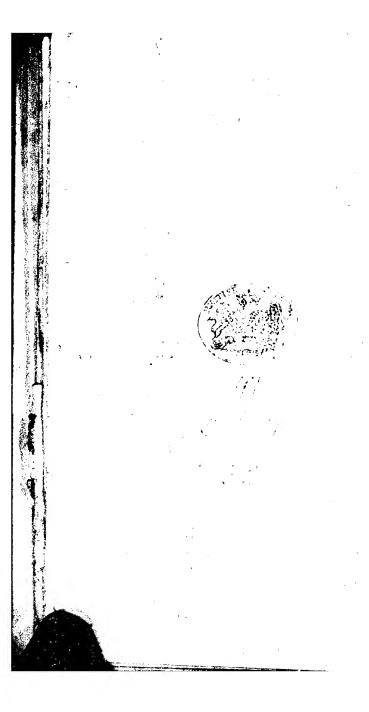
of the same Order and observance.



AT BRVXELLES,

By the Widowe of HVBERT ANTONE, called Velpius, sworne Printer of the Court, at the signe of the golden Eagle by the Palace. 1632.

Permissu Superiorum.





TO THE RIGHT
HONOVRABLE

AND TRVELY
VERTVOVS LADY

VERTVOVS LADY,

ELIANOR

P O W E S, &c. .

All prosperitie in this vvorld, and everlastinge glorie in the vvorld to come.

留ADAM,

Although the greatnes of your blood doth chalenge much

a 3 res-

THE EPISTLE respect, yet I knovve by experience, that your LADI-SHIP thinketh vertue to be only and true nobilitie; and that to be Gods seruat, you esteeme it your greatest glorie. This therfore vertuous and religious dispositio of yours, beinge the only loadstone that dravveth my affection to loue, and honour you, hath embol. dened me to present vnto your LADISHIPS veivve, this little treatise of mentall prayer, vvith the life of the Authour, vyhich longe fince, and alwayes from

the

DEDICATORIE. the first time I tooke it in hand, linteded to shravvde vnder the vvinges of your protection, but beinge hindred by some occasions, vyherin holy obedience hath emploied me; I could neuer compas my desires till novve. I novve therfore send it to your LADI. SHIP desiringe you to acr cept of it, not for my desertes, vvhich indeede haue bene none to claime such a fauour, but for the dignitie of the matter of vvhich it treateth (though I am afraied made much vvorse

2 4 by

THE EPIST. DEDIC.
by my vnskilfull pen) as alsofor the sanctitie of the Authour vvho made it, and your LADISHIP vvill increase my many obligations tovvardes you, and alvvayes oblige me to rest and remaine.

MADAM,

Your honors poore beadsman,

GILES VVILLOVGHBY.



BREIFE RELATION

OF

THE LIFE AND DEATH

OF

THE BLESSED FATHER

FR. PETER DE

ALCANTARA,

FRANCISCAN FRYAR.

VV ritten by G. VV. of the same Order & observance.

THE PROLOGVE.



Isericordias Domini in æternum cantabo. (a) I will (a) Psalm. 88. Singe the mercies of

our Lord for ever, fault that Kingly Prophet DAVID:

And

THE PROLOGVE. And not without cause: for so great and vnspeakable, are the mercieworkes of the almightie, which out of the bowells of his infinite goodnes, he hath she wed to mankinde from the first instant of his creation, that the toungues of men and Angells are never able to expresse them.

How wonderfull was this benefit; that creatinge man after bus (b) Gen. 1. O'Done (b) image and likenes, (c) he (c) Magister Would have made him partaker of eternall felicitie, and vested with (d) Gabriel. his originall iustice, vvithout (d) lib.2.dist.19. quest. vnica, death or any passage by misery would have associated him with the companie of Angells, if he had not, by his ovvne default, violated the lawes of bu creatour? not withstandinge this act of malice, the diuine

dift. 20.

THE PROLOGVE. divine clemencie would not suffer the worke of his powerfull handes, so to perish: but he accordinge to the diversitie of times, (e) alwaies (e) scotus lib. ordeined opportune remedies, to re- 4. dift. 1. qu. duce wanderinge man to the right way of his owne saluation. Nowe manifestinge bis divine pleasure by the meanes of Angels: nowe sendinge the Patriarchs replenished with his heavenly grace, who by their good example, might stirr them up to pietie: then sendinge the Prophets illuminated with his holy Spirit, not only to preach the present benefits exhibited to mankinde, but also to foretell the future incarnation of the Sonne of God, with the mysterie of bis death and passion, by meanes of which man should be loosed from the power of Sathan,

and

THE PROLOGVE. and eased of the heavy loade of his transgressions.

Thus farr hath that impene-(f)(Religioli) Ectelia pars trable aby se of the divine clemencie, Japientiors li- sweetly disposed all thinges, requi-Pientiores ha site for the sauinge of the soule of IF li funt, quã resique mor man. But if we will extend our gus, qui seip- thoughtes a little further, and call fos à mundi to mind the great benefits, Itill garunt, vi vi- heaped vpon man, after the afcenta luam Deo consecrarunt sion of our blessed Sautour, we shall Nazianz ora in laute Basi finde them innumerable. VV ho is lij *Beatiilli certe, at ter not astonished at the vocation of beati, vi qui mankinde, that the Apostolicall Dei amore fia gravant, at 75 trumpet of a fewe men, foundinge ob eius amore omnia proni- to humane eares, the Euangelicall hilo duxerut, siquide lacritruth, through the wholl world, mas profuderunt dieg; ac should rouze vp (f) soules makinge note in lustu the * happy & thrice happy to forvi aternam sake all worldly vanities? to beconfo!ationem adipiscerciur: take themselues to a state of pertection; THE PROLOGVE.

fection; to sell all they have and carnes sum give to the poore: to live in perpegive to the poore: to live in perpetuall chastitie, and simple obedience:

to spend their dayes in rigorous penance, watchinge, fastinge and ex iperent.

prayer, and finally to renounce all hist. B. losathe seeminge pleasures for (g) true (g) consolation
there are none) which the flatteringe world could afford vnto the.

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These thinges are dayly putt dum est, vere in practice by many, who prosesse consolationis the gospell of Christ. For where of Ber, in ser. Catholique Religion flourisheth, vir. Natiu sic se bates vnimen and women, filled with religion in eigen gious soules, who consecrate them-nis siquidem selves a perpetuall sacrifice to the dium, alterius laboris initial adoris initial adoris

How many religious doe vve sem de prisee honoured vvith Preistly sun-medijs moniss.
Vide plura
tion, (an office requiringe more apud Hieron.

dilicia, o gaudia illes Damascen. in ทนีส์ ขนิเร, 💇 ad nibilu viilis, or quod magis metue-& Jalubris laboris inisis est. Idem in

then

THE PROLOGVE.

Plată de bono then humane (h) puritie and a flat. religit. 3 burthen scarcely to be supported by cap. 1. burthen scarcely to be supported by (h) Quo non Angels shoulders) executinge their oportei este charge vith great integretie of successful sold non plendidiorem minde, carefull of their ovene, and ri radio non plendidiorem zealous of the sauinge of their mană carnem hanc dividen. reighbours soules, who by their tem? os quod holy doctrine and exemplare lives, igni spiritali repletur, lin- preach to the Christian woorld a gua aremendo nimis reformation: who spare noe paines sanguine rubescit. Sic D or tedious travells, to propagate the chrys. hom.

83. in Mat.

And Pope Gelasius vyritingeto Fluidius Rishon doth

And Pope Gelasius vyritinge to Elpidius Bishop, doth excellently fet dovvne the great purity required to Preiftly function sayinge : Sacrosantta Religio que Catholisam continet disciplinam, tantam sibi renerentiam vendicat, vt de eam quilibet nist pura conscientia, non audeat peruentre : nam quomodo ad divini mysterij confect stionem calestis spiritus innocatus adueniat , si sacerdos & qui eam adesse de precetur criminofis plenus actionibus reprobeintit.q. e. SACROSANCTA. Although a vvicked Preift doth confecrate and adminiferthe Sacramentes truely, yet he sinneth greiuiously in eolecratinge, & administratinge vnv vorthily, Sacrificia impierum eis ipsi soberunt qui offerunt impie 1.q.1.c.PER IS AI AM, neceffe est, vi effe munda Studeat manns, que dilnere fordes con rat: ne tatta quaque deteritis inquinet, si fordida ipsa stercoris tutum tenet . Greg. in regefto.b. 1. Epist. 24. @ ponitur 1.qu 1 caf. NECESSE EST.

THE PROLOGVE. faith of IESVS CHRIST, to heathens and infidells; vvho couragiously labour in God almighties vineyard, exposinge their lines for the name of lesvs. Indies both east and vvest are vvitnesses of their zeulous and heroick spi. rits, there they sealed the truth of the cospell with the effusion of their Jacred blood. Yea vubat actes memorable in the church of God are there, voberin (i) these men (i) Hieron. have not had a very greate stroke. no slains re-And finally they so well employ, and lig. 1.2.c.30. multiply those talentes, publich the great commaunder of heaven and earth, hath bestovved vpon them bere, that assuredly they may expect an eternall revvard in the Kmoedome of beauen hereafter.

THE PROLOGVE.

But that which is more admi-(k) Nuptie replés terram rable, to see a multitude of the Pirginit 46 paradisum.D. weaker sexe, to abandon all world-Hieron. (1) Flos est il- ly pleasures: they who in the world germinis, de- might baue Twoome in brauery, and cus atque ornamentu gra- have bad all thinges at their owne sie spiritualis, lara, indo- commaund; to inclose themselves in lis, laudis O bonoris, opus a retired Cloister, there to spend integrum atq; their dayes in penance, and to incorruptum, Dei imagore- consecrate the very flower of their spondens, ad Jand moniam Springinge youth, a Sweet Smellinge
Dhi, illustrior portio green sacrifice to their celestiall spouse Christi, gaudet per ipsas, Christ Iesvs. These truly atque in illis targiter flores are those that (k) fill and beautifie S. Matris Ec the garden of paradise with lillies clesiæ gloriosa of puritie: these are the (1) flowers fecunditas, quantoq; plus gloriola vir- of our holy mother the Catholique ginitas numero suo ad. Church, which make her glorious dit, tanto plus gaudium ma- and fruitfull. These are they, that tris augescit. make that happie chaunge, amovirg. 1 4 c. 24 ments fadinge pleasure, for an imTHE PROLOGVE. mortall crowne of glorie.

Thus we fee perpetuall rivers streaminge from the fountaine of God almighties m rcie. But let ys descend a lutle further into hus aboundant charitie, and take notice of his fatherly providence, that in process of declininge times, when the blood of our redeemer, hath oftentimes begun to wax cold in the bearts of men, he would not suffer it altogether to be extinguished, but accordinge to varietie of times, nener ceased to repaire his church by the ministery of some elected seruats, Whom he sent into this world as second Apostles, who by their example, and doctrine might drawe men out of the mire of their sinnes, renewe the feruour of our bleffed Saniours passion, and reduce collapsed disci-

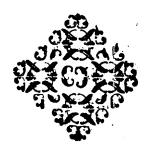
mor-

THE PROLOGVE.

discipline to her former riginal.

Many bath he sent for this end; and among it many this blessed Saint,

S. PETER DE ALCAN
TARA, a man from his very cradle confectated to Euangelicall perfection; he was a faithfull labourer in our Lords vineyard, with great fidelitie performinge his commanded taske, as it will plainly appeare by that which followeth in his life.



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CHAP. I.

OF THE BIRTH

AND

EDVCATION,

OF BLESSED

ALCANTARA,

And of his enteringe into Religion.

borne at (a) Norba Casa- do prout consolera, vulgarly called A L. stat exprinit.

CANTARA, in the yeare illi concesso an. Dñi 11740 an. Dñi 11

They

(a) Cinitae

Hipania mi-

litia ordinis

They brought vp their younge Sonne in the feare of God, and fowed in him the seedes of vertue; they put him to schoole where, as he profited in learninge, so his obedience towards his parentes did likwise increase. Although he was a child, yet he withdrewe himdelte from the common sportes of children, and forted himselfe amongst men, whome he sawe inclined to deuotion. In these his tender yeares he addicted himselfe, to the workes of mercie: he applied himselfe seriously to learne the Christian doctrine; he often visited churches, and holy places, he frequented the Sacrametes, and continually emploied himselfe in good workes: all which did aboundantly presage his future sanctitie, but more confirmed it, by that which followed immediately, for he was skarce sixtene yeares of age, when, before he knewe, he began to loath the world, and when the younge (b) anidora sparkes of his vertues began to breake fuerit ea que into a flame of deuotion. He opened agends fant the dores of his foule to the inspirations scireei, qui of the holy Ghost: and as he excelled and apar his fellowe studentes in science, so he D. chrys.be. knewe that all (b) science, was igno-13. ed Rom. rance without the right knowledge of

of bleffed Alcantara.
God. Therfore from that time forward he applied his minde to heauenly wifedome, and bufied himselfe cheifly to know what should be most acceptable

to his facred Maiestie.

About that time, there was a famous and reformed monastery of Francis-CANS in the province of S. GABRIEL, three miles from VALENTIA, whether he addressed himselfe, there to bringe his good defires to a joyfull periode. But as he went alonge towards this place, he came to a great river, called Tiartar, which without boate, was impossible to be passed ouer. He seeinge this vnexpected barr, to stop his happy iournie, looked about, hopinge to espye Iome waterman, who might carry him ouer, but when he could see none, to giue him any affiftance: he cast his eies to heauen, and with great anxietie lamented this vnhappie hindrance. Behold! vpon the fuddaine (as he himfelfe related)(c)he was miraculously traspor- (c) Marianus ted on the other fide of the river, with- in eius vita out any notable motion, that he could cape is perceiue.

This miracle was not vnlike to that, when the river of Iordane stood still for the Children of I srael to pass;

b 3 0

or when S. PETER walked vpon the waves of the sea: and indeed, it was no small beginninge of God almighties many fanours, exhibited to this bleffed

Saint.

This obstacle beinge remoued, he paffed the other part of his way, (the holy Ghost beinge his guide) without any difficultie, and at length ariued to his desired harbour, this solitarie monasterie, situated amongst great rocks, which they comonly call Los Manxeredes, where he came to the Fathers, and asked the habit of 'S. FRANCIS of them, who did graunt it to him with as much charitie, as he begged it with humilitic.

But when this bleffed Saint confidered his poore habitation, lequestred from the companie of nien, and 46stracted from all worldly tumoultes. And when he lawe himselfe vested in his penitentiall weede, we may welk ithmagine with what meditatios he fourred himselfe forward in God almighties scruice. He spake to his owne some these or the like wordes, behold, thou halt nowe accopished thy de-,, in e, thou art nowe arrived to the land, of promile, and chined up to the,

(d) hi-,,

of bleffed Alcantara.

(d) highest mountaine of God al- , (d) Het terre mighties fauour to mortall ma in this ,, montaofa, vale of misery (that is) the sacred state, in sublimit so of a religious life, where, by howe, descrips seculi much more thou art sequestred from , vacat tanto the pleasures of the flatteringe world, ,, maiores habet the more thou enjoyest the fredome, delicias siriof thy spirit. Thou art nowe come to ,, I. . Epifolethe house of God, in which it is better ,, rum. Epist.3. for the to be an abiect then to dwell, ad Basis in the courtes of Princes; all occasions, of offendinge thy creatour are nowe,, taken a way, thy foule is nowe fure,, not to be defiled with the pitch of, cuill convertation. Thy companie, nowe are 'e) terrostrial Angels, who, (e) que nomithough they live on earth, yet they,, ne appellem haue their conversation in heaven, all, nescio, homi-whose actions in cite thee to nothinge, an Angelos elle but to aspire vnto perfection. ,, serrestres de-Thou findest here no snares to en-,, gentes in tertangle thee in worldly vanities, no, yis, fed conflatterers to applaud thee when thou, habentes in doest oftend, or any thinge else to, calis. Differwithdrawe thy affection from the, nard ferm ad Cross of CHRIST. Thy beloued; mouse Det. ipoule hath brought thee nowe into,2 this holy defert, to recreat thy foule, with his heauenly consolatios (f) here ,, (f) Anima & abstracted from all wordly tumoults, ,, corporeis cub 4 it may "

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piditatibus li- it may atted only to divine wisedome, bera in aula & the noise of all temporall cares, be-, mentis posit inge hist & tilent, it may be wholly, Sapientia, vb: emploied in sacred contemplation, &, omn frepieu rauished with eternall pleasures. God, flente cara almightie hath nowe wasted thee, rum, in media ouer this troublesome sea, and placed, tationibus thee heere, in the quiete harbour of, Jantin, win thy faluation, in which state in respect, delicijs late- of thy former, thou art farr more, tur aternis. Governor (a) fall foldomer, rise sooner, w S. Leo in ser, sure to (g) fall seldomer, rise sooner, n 3. de iciunio stand more securely, liue more, 10.mensis, & sweetly, and dye more confidently., (g) In Reli- Goe too, I say, why standest thou, gione homo still? why camest thou hether? Con-, viuit purius, sider thy course habit, and see what, furgit relo- penance it exacteth? Looke vpon, cins, incedit the place, and reflect what spirit it, coutius, quies teacheth thee? be couragious and, eit securius, make no delay, thy death is certaine, » brins, purga- and thy hower vncertaine, the judge is, turcitins, mo. at hand, (h) Alas! the pleasure of this, vitar confide- world is short, but the punishment for, tius, manera- it perpetuall. A little sufferinge here new copiosis. Idem. Hom. and infinite glorie hereafter. Thus, simile est re- this newe soldiar of CHRIST spent gnu alcrum, his tin e, in holy discourses, sometimes homini nego- of God almighties maiestie, sometimes this Fr rer. of his owne miserie: although his preta extore, ad cedent conversation to Religion was a mir- d

of bleffed Alcantara. mirrour of perfection, yet he stoode not still in that grace, he had already gotten, but continually aspired to higher, in which he farr excelled his fellowe nouices. Two vertues were cheifly eminent in him: simplicatie and puritie. He likwile had a perfect oblinion of all wordly thinges. He greedily defired, and willingly accepted of the inferiour, and balest employmentes of the monasterie. Neither did he esteeme it a dishonour to him to cast himselfe at the feete of the Friers, but was most willinge to serue euery one at their beck. In this his first year che laied such groundes of humilitie, that in his wholl life after he was a rare example, and patterne of this vertue. Neither when he was promoted to superioritie, did he leave of his humble exercises. Thus goinge from grace to grace, from vertue to vertue, his good example was a burninge lampe to giue others light, to immitate his vertues, that the wholl monasteric began euerie day more and more to flourish in regulare observance, and in the opinion of the world, to get a great name of fanctitie.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of his naturall gifts, and of his prudence, and mortification of his cies.

E was an elected vessell, beautified with all the iewells of Lyertues, and ashis minde was replenished with supernatural gitts, to his bodie wanted not its naturall graces He was of a spare bodie, but comely, he had a grave and modest looke, his cies were sparklinge, tokens of the fire ofidiume loue, which was in his loue anuilible to the eie. There was not one member in that man , which was not Aubordinate to the rule of reason. His *Ipeoch was meeke and humble, his corucrlation Angelicall. He had an excellent naturall witt, joyned with a happe memorie: he had likwise a singular good judgement (as appeared in his gouernment:)he was couragious in goinge through with busines which did tendito God, Almighties honour and the good · of religion: he was gratefull to all, giuinge

of bleffed Alcantara. uinge to euerie one their due respect:he was dexterous in his actions, modest in correctinge and a peace maker, reconcilinge those who vpon any occasion, had bone animers. In his dermons he was hott but mounge: in hearinge of confessions he was a helper, a countailer, and a comforter: in his ordinary ipeech he was not fawninge, nor bitinge, and his connersation without any pertinacie: and to coclude all in a fewe wordes: - he was a man of an other world, of whome we may justly lay as (a) A LE- (a) Autombe XANDER HALENSIS faied of S. Posseuinus in BONAVENTURE. That he was a fa ro apperaman, in whome Adam feemed nor to have ribus Ecclef. finned. Herwas areformer, Prelate, Ma- nom. 1. de D. lter, and patterne of perfection, of the Bonanens. Scraphicall Order of our holy Father S. FRANCIS, who through lownsny Prouinces and remote Kingedomes, villettrated this facted inflitution 3 las an order Apostle proofdained by God Aland this forthis happine end. This man

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of his religious simplicatie, and mortification of his eies.

V T to descend to particulars, wherin his religious simplicitie was manifested. He was so abforped in God almightie, that he minded nothinge of exteriour thinges. When he was a younge brother keepinge the keyes of the pauntrie, for the space of fix months, there was in the pauntrie grapes and pomgranades, which lay to palpably, that none could choose but see the, but he for that space neither sawe, nor smelt, much lesse touched them: beinge asked why he did not give them vnto the brothers, he humbly answered, that he knewe of none that were there. An other time, liuinge fower yeares in an other cloister, he neuer tooke notice of a great tree which stood in the middest of the court, which was obuious to euery ones eie. Being a yeare in an other place, and asked what his cell was made of, he aniwcred,

of bleffed Alcantara. fwered, he knew not whether it was of stone, or brick, or ywood. And a chappell which he frequented about others, yet he knevve neither fituation, forme, or any ornament which did belonge thervnto. He was wont to fay to blefled THERESIA his ghostly child, that he knevve neuer a brother in his monasterie, but only by his speech. Moreouer he was so mornified in his eies, that vyhere locuer he vvas, he knevve no difference in places, no diffance of cells, and finally he was a dead man to all exteriour thinges. Neither was this mortification any stupiditie of nature, or want of lenses, but his continual bulyinge his thoughts vpo God almighty, a more noble, and higher object. Who could but thinke this chast child of S. FRANCIS to have made a coucnant with his cies, not to behold a virgine? and well he might be filled that sonne of a doue, vyhose cies vvere vvalhed with the milke of innocency. He kept such a continuall guard ouer his eies, that he neuer knevve any vvoman by her face. There was a certaine noble matron famous for her vertue, vvho vvas vvontat Placentia, some times to visite the holy Father, for his 13 2

fpirituall counsell she meetinge him at A B V L A, saluted him, and expressed to him the difficulties of her state, he modestly denied, that he euer savve the vvoman. If euer he opened his eies, it vvas in the quire, though he had so good a memory, that he knevve most part of the office vvithout booke. Beinge Superiour he did particularly correct this impersection vvith seueritie. Knovvinge, nothinge to be more presudiciall to the soule, then to set open those vvindovves, at vvhich, doth enter the greater part of sinne, that doth deside the heart of man.



CHAP.

of bleffed Alcantara.

CHAP. IV.

VVith vohat austeritie and mortification the boly Father lined.

Be cave for the most part this holy Father lived in solitaries conventes, most remote from vvorldly tumoults, or rather heremitages, all his rigourous penance, could not be taken notice of by any. Nevertheless we will sett downe some, which he could not hide from those, with vvhome he conversed.

He did vvare for seauen yeares together a haire shirt full of hard knotts. S. THERESIA affirmeth that he vvore it twentie yeares.

Besides plates of Iron, and other things wherevith he tyranized ever his tender slesh. His disciplines were so frequent and bloodie, that he seemed rather the trunke of a tree then a humaine bodie. He would never cover his head although it rayned never so fast, or the

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sun shined neuer so hott. His diet was so slender, and meane, that in his youth, and old age he did eate nothinge but browne bread, and the most mustie crusts that he could finde. If sometimes he recreated himselfe with a fewe boyled hearbes, he would not be so delicious as to eate them with oyle. Beinge superiour he caused as many beanes and pease to be boyled at once, as should ferue the convent for seaven dayes together, which austeritie his subjects most willingly embraced, beinge glad in some measure to immitate their cheise. But he seasoned his owne portion with ashes, or some vngratefull liquour, least his pallate should take pleasure in his mcaté.

Mother THERESIA hath heard his companions say, that some times he lived eight dayes together without any meate or drinke, especially when with more violence, he addicted himselfe to devotion. For he suffered in his prayers frequent raptes and extasses, of which (saith she) I am wittnesse. He never drake winesbut water, though for the infirmitie of his stomach it was prescribed to him by the Phistian: but he constantly resuled it sayinge that nothinge was so

of bleffed Alcantara. repugnant to holy pouertie, and abstinence, as flesh and wine, the one beinge an enemy to chastitie, the other to contemplation, both which, as longe as he lived, by Gods grace he would enjoy. I will fett downe for the satisfaction of the deuout reader the wordes of euer bleffed THERESIA, the glorie and foundresse of the discalled Carmelites. to whome he was some times ghostly Father, of whome she confesses to haue received much spirituall comfort: whose authoritie, by reason of her renouned sanctitie, and livinge at the same time with him, is without controull. Her wordes be these. (a) God almightie (a) Ex vita bereaued vs of a man of admirable example, B. Therefia when he tooke out of this life, Father P E- cap. 27. TER OF ALCANTARA, the world it seemeth could endure no longer so great perfection, they fay that our health is not so good, that novve those times be past, this holy man vvas of this time, he vvas fatt in spirit, as those of other ages, he had also the vvorld vnder his feete, for though vve doe not goe barefoote, nor doe such austere penance as he did, there are many thinges (as I have saied else were) to treade dovvne the vvorld vvitb all. And our Lord teacheth them , when he feeth fuch a minde , as he

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gaue in great measure to this holy man, publich I speake of, to continue 47. yeares together in such austere penance, as all knovve. I will declare some part of it, for I knovve that it is all true. He told it to me and to an other, from vyhome he concealed little, and the cause vvhy he told it me, vvas the great love which he bare me, and which our Lord gave him to defende me, and encourage me, in the time of so great necesitie, as that vvas, vvhich I have spoken of, and vvill declare further; it seemeth to me, that he told me, that he had slept no more but an hovver and halfe betyvixt day and night for the space of 40. yeares, and that this year the greatest difficultie he fovend in his penance at the beginninge, to ouercome his sleepe, and for this cause he did alvvayes. Either kneele or stand, and when he slept it vvas sittinge leaninge his head against a little peece of vvood, which he had driven into the vvall, he could not lye downe though he vould, for his cell as is knowne, vvas no longer then fovver foot and an halfe, in all thefe yeares be neuer did put on his capuce, horv great sun-shine or raine soeuer it vvas, neither had he any thinge on his feet, nor other garment, but his habit of course cloth, vvithout any other thinge next his skin, and this as streight as could be endured, and a short cloke of the

of bleffed Alcantara. of the same vponit, he told me that vuhen it voas very cold he did putt it of, and opened the dore and little vvindovve of his cell, that aftervvard vvhen he did putt his cloke on againe, and sbutt his dore, he might give some contentment and recreat his bodie, vvhich before vvas frozen vvith cold: He did very ordinarily eate but once in three dayes; and he asked me at what I maruailed, for it vvas verie posible, for one that accustomed himselfe to it. His ponerty was extreame, and likevvise his mortification in his youth, &c. With all his sanctitie he vvas verie affable, though he vsed not many prordes, if he prere not spoken too, for then he vvas verie please singe, hauinge a good understandinge. And a little after. His end vvas like his life preachinge and admonishinge his Fryars. When he favve death dravve nighe, he faid the Pfalme: Lætatus lum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi; and kneelinge dovvne departed. Since our Lord hathlet me enioy him more then in his life. givinge me aduife and counfell in many thinges I have seene him many times in exceedinge great glorie; the first time he appeared vnto me, he saied: O happie penace which did merit such a reward! and many other thinges. A yeare before he died, he appeared to me beinge absent, and I knevve that he should dye, and I sent him voord beinge some leagues from

The life from bence. VVben he gave up the ghost, he appeared to me and sayed, that he vvent to rest. I beleeved it nor, I told some of it, and eight dayes after the nevves came that be vvas dead, or rather began to live for ever. Behold here bu austeritie endeth with so great glorie, he seemed to comfort me more novve, then when he was in this pyorld. Our Lord told me once, that nothinge should be asked in his name, vyhich he vyould not heare. I have (eene many thinges fulfilled vybich I have desired him to aske of our Lord; he be bleffed for ever. Amen. And in the 30. Chapter of her life she layeth as followeth: Our Lord vouchlafed to remedy a great part of my trouble, and for that time the vuholl, by bringinge to this place the bleffed Father PETER OF ALCANTARA, of vyhome I have alreadie made mention, and spoken somethinge of his pevance, for amongst other thinges, I vvas certified, that for 20. yeares he had Prome a cilice of plate continually. He is the authour of certaine little bookes of prayer, which are novy much vsed in the spanish tongue, for as one, that bath exercised it well he pyrote very profitably, givinge, most excellent rules to those, who addict themselves to prayer. He observed the first rule of S. FRANH CIS with all rigour, and other thinges which I have related before. Thus she. And to much

of bleffed Alcantara. much shall suffice to speake of, but part of his rigourous penance, it was his feruent zeale, and loue of God, not stregth of bodie, which made this crabbed way of penance early to the the out Phrite whose example may (though not in so great a measure as he did) justly moue vs, to shake of that old and selfe-loue excuse of ours, in layinge, our bodies are weake, when alas ! our willes are frozen, and so nice, that we are assailed to expose our carcasse but to a poore triali, (b) Non quia the heather SENECA will check out difficilia queindenotion, who layeth: (b) Not because dam sunt, ideo certains thinges are hard, therfore two dury non audemus, mot doe them , but becaufe voe dare not doe audemus, ideo them, therfore they are hard. difficilia.



CHAP.

Of his great puritie, and humilitie.

HE man of God increasinge in his rigorous penance, did not only mortifie in part, but wholly subdued his passions, and made his senses subordinate to the rule of reason, he suffered nothinge to enter into his foule, which might separate, or in the least kinde withdrawe his affectio from his beloued spouse, for (as much as was possible for pilgrime man) he enioyed the spirit of God; golden peace and diuine consolation satt vpon his winges of contemplation, and where others make their bodies masters, he made his a slaue vnto his spirit. Hence it came to pals, that many of both sexe, drawne with the fragrat odour of his vertues, flocked to him, as to an other Apostle, to whose counsells and admonitions they obeyed, as to a diuine oracle.

Vpo a time the count ORAPSANE a denout nobleman, came to visit him.

of bleffed Alcantara.

And fallinge into discourse, how much God almightie was moved with the fins of the world, out of his zeale breaketh into these speeches. O Father! what doe you thinke? what will be come of this wicked world? doe you thinke the diuine iustice, can conteine it selfe any longer from reuenge? behold howe vertue is oppressed, and fin triumpheth? how wilfully doe we hoarde vp anger against the day of anger? to which the man of God modestly answered and layed, noble Sir, doe not afflict your felfe, a remedy will easily be found to cure this disease, the point of the difficultie confisteth only in you and me, for the generall perdition of mankinde, floweth from this fountaine, that all and euery one dissemblinge or cloakinge their owne fins, accuse the wholl, when the wholl can not be said to sin at all, but particular persons in the wholl. Wherfore men crye out against the wickednesse of the word, that all are naught, and none that doe good, when if they would but looke into their owne particular, they should finde matter enough offorrowe, and to move them selues to doe penance for their owne taults: but nowe because they blame the

wholl.

And

wholl, they negled their owne particulares, and instific themselues with a sortish presumption. Therfore, noble Sir, let your Lordship, and I mend one a peece, and then a great part of the world wilbe amended, we shall appease the angery judge, and repaire a great part of the ruine of mankinde by our

good example.

When CHARLES the fifth recollected himselfe in a certaine monasterie of the HIERONYMITES, vnderstandinge of the sanctitie and integrety of this holy Father, he sent for him, with an intent to make him his ghostly Father. But he hubly refusinge so great an honour, alleaged some reasons, why he thought this employment not to be fittinge for him. At which deniall the Emperour beinge a little moued, with anger, saied, we charge you, Father, that you would take care of our soule. He sceinge this suddaine alteration of C E-S A R, fell downe at the feete of his maieflie, and earneftly defired him, to differre the busines to what day or house he would please to appoint, that in the meane time he might comend it to God almighty; which the Emperour graunted, then he tooke his leave of the Em-

perour,

of bleffed Alcantara. perour, and saied, this renouned C Es AR, shalbe a figne vnto you, that it is not accordinge to God almighties will, which you have defired, if I doe not retourne at the appointed time. Then palfinge to his former folitude, as he went, he complained with many fighes and groanes, to God almightie, tearinge by the diviles of Sattan, to be drawne from the embrasinges of his beloued spoule CHRIST IESUS. Helentuphisferuat prayers to the almightie throne, and faied these like wordes: Lord, I have, not therfore left the world, and beta-, ken my felte to this holy defert, that,, now at length my name should be re-,, nowned in a Princes court, and live, in honour, that am a poore FRAN-,, CISCAN FRYAR. Why should, my eares be troubled with the flatte-,, ringes of courtiers, who came to speake my fault in religion? I confess that 20 this office may be exercised without, finne, but whether it be expedient, for my foule, fweet I Es v s, tell me?, and when he entred into his cell., Lord, I befeech thee pull me hot from,, hence, whether thy omnipotent hand,, hath brought me. Here I am lafe, here,, I am rich; because I enjoy thee whom

alone canst satisfie my soule. Alas! with, out thee what is the wholl empire?, and with thee this poore cell, isa, Kingdome of contet. Here let me liue:, Here let me die. Lord let it please thee, what I wish for, because all is thine, what soeuer I desire. If thou grantest, me my petition, let this be a signe vnto, me, that CESAR molesteth me no, more. So risinge, as beinge heard, did appeare no more before him. Neither did the Emperour euer solicite him after,

The same request did the illustrious Princesse I O HANNA, sister to PHIL-LIP the second, Catholique Kinge of Spaine, make vnto this holy Father, whome he likewise denied after the same manner. Thus whilest he fled hopours, he was most honoured of all, and

reuerenced of euery one.

And what candide synceritie he vsed, in contemninge proferred honours, men of no small qualitie observed, that those who honoured him, he would no more regard their speech then a simple ideot, and would labour to divert them from that, to some other discourse. He had rather be called a sinner then a holy man, and he himselfe would (but without scandall) lay open to the world his

imperfections, vnder vvhich, his vertues and graces vvere cloaked. But God the fearcher of fecrets, by hovve much he did striue to hide them, the more he made his fame to shine in the vvorld, to the astonishment of all. For he yeas a man vvhome God had chosen accordinge to his ovene heart, by vvhose industrie, and from vvhose spiritual loines did springe, many great servantes of IESVS CHRIST, and many renovvned martyrs of our holy Order.



CHAP.

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CHAP.

Of his feruant prayers and raptures, co of his spirit of prophesie.

O D almightie was alwayes prefent with him, and he with God. His soule was like a fyerie fornace, made horr with the fuell of the crosse of Christ. It was not in his owne power, to conteine himselfe, but what thinge focuer he either fawe, or heard which might delight his beloued I es vishough it were but a farr of, his heart-firinges would beginne to treble, and his vitall spirits leaste him , and frequently fall into extafie. He was accouflomed for a wholl houre together, to fay his prayers with his armes stretched out in manner of a croffe, fightinge and weepinge, till at last he would be besides himselfe, eleuated from the ground, and vnited only to his God. He was oftentimes in this manner rapt, when he was in the quire at mattins. But his denotion was much more augmeted at the aulter, when he celebrated the dreadfull facri-

fice,

of bleffed Alcantara.

fice, then would rivers of teares gush in aboundance from his venerable cies, that would move the most stonic and obdurate heart of any of the standers by, vnto compunction. After maile he would withdrawe himselfe into hiscell, where he hath beene often heard to have had greuious conflicts with deuils: who oftentimes appearinge in a visible shape, would followe him vp and downe with a terrible furie.

In talkinge of God almightie, his foule would be presently inebriated with divine sweetnes, and ascendinge by degrees from one word to an other, as, what was God incarnated for me? was God made man for me? was God vested with humane flesh for me? and the like. He would forthwith breake into exclamations, and hurryinge himselfe into his cell, would for the space of about three howers together, look the victof his ienies. (a) One day, a brother, that was (a) Marianue newely made Preist, practifings in the in vita B. Algarden to finge masse, when he heard cant. cap. 10. him singe these wordes of S. JOHNS gospell. (Et Verbum care factum est.) He was elevated into the aire two cubits high, and flewe through fower dores with the violence of this morion with length ئر · ي 🖚

length fettinge himselfe vpon his kneed before the bleffed Sacrament for a longe space together remained in extalie.

This therfore yvas ordinarie to the freind of God, that when he heard any thinge of the humanitie of our bleffed Sauiour, or any deuout vyord of the holy Scripture, it vould cause him raptures. Neither could he help them, though he did striue much against them, especially in the presence of others, but his heart voould become like meltinge vvax in the middest of his bovvells. He vvas often in leinge the Crucifix, moued with such compassion that his armes a cross vould be rapt, with little cloudes glitteringe about his heade.

He would some times prophesie, to some the loss of honours, to others sudden death, to other purgatorie. Which would fall out the verie day and hower

he told them.

The first time he sawe S. THERE SIA he told her what contradictions and afflictions she suffered from her ghostly Fathers, and other spirituall persons, who would needs perswade her, that she was seduced. And moreouer, that she was to suffer much more, in the same kinde. He likewife

of bleffed Alcantara. forteold what should be successe in the Indies.

VII. CHAP.

Of his patience.

E traced the steeps of our bles- (a) Quis Sanfed Saujour, and all his glo- forum fine rious Saints, (4) all vehich did pstientia coneuer merit their crovvnes vvithout in delicin sacarryinge of the cross of CHRIST.

He vvas an other patient IOB, in ideo fortaffe sufferinge the temptatios and afflictios, Hierone the infirmitie of man is subject vnto, he vvas in a particulare manner loadé vvith the heavie burthen of them, not withstandinge his feruant spirit, patiently supported, and victoriously triumphed ouer all his difficulties mauger all the force of Sathan. His frequent combates, his persecutions, his sicknes, his longe and tedious trauells, the difficulties he did vndergoe in erectinge his prouince, vyould take vp too much time to relate. He was so greedie of sufferinge, that he esteemed himselfe happie, to pare

bare afflictios for the name of IESVS, fayinge, that there vvas no vvay so sure and easie to attaine vnto perfection, as the carryinge of the cross of CHRIST. He vvould therfore begge of God almightie that he might neuer be vvithout some affliction. Thus did our couragious champion trample vpon all his some couragious champion trample vpon all his safiliske, he vvalked vpon the Lion and the Draggon, vvhilest he vanguished all his toes, not so much by resistinge, as by sufferinge.



CHAP.

of bleffed Alcantara.

CHAP. VIII.

Of his charitie towardes his neighbour.

Is charitie tovvardes his neibour vvas vnspeakable, for this L cause he ofte visited hospitalls to serue the fick, assistinge them both spiritually and corporally, and oftentimes miraculously restoringe them to their former health. After he had made an end of his denotions, the residue of his time he spent, in comfortinge the afflicted, in cherishing the feable, and finally in any thinge he could immagine, might cofort his neighbours, either corporally or spiritually, so that innumerable people of all conditions, and sexes continually flocked vnto him for his charitable assistance.



d CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of his pouertie.

(a) S. Franciscus non so= lum pauper-E vvas a rigid obseruer of hotatis commodis libentißily pouertie, vyhich in immitame fruebatur, tion of his patron (a) S. FRANsed etiam ita bonorabat & cis, he not only loued, but honoured fo colebat, quasi farr that he was wont to call it the rem eximiam Euangelicall pearle, vvhervvith he en-🗢 eui nulla bumana di- riched his nevve erected province, in gnitas posset that lustre as the observance was in the coparari Iraq; infancie of our Seraphicall Order, from firibit, eam in vehich time, and by vehole example, omni sermone most prouinces through the Christian medo Matre, vvorld haue excelled in this particumodo sponsa, lare point, as much as in their former medò Domi- former as much as me their former nam appella- splendour. He permitted his brethebat, sape esia ren to haue nothinge in their cells but Reginam, pro- of mere necessitie, and to the preachers prered quodin he permitted them no more but two eiusque geni- or three bookes, with the Bible and a trice, adeo in- crucifix. figniter efful-

fister effulfisser. He vvas vpon a time asked by S.
Platus de bo. THERESIA vvhither or no she
no star. relig. should found her Monasteries vviih
lib. 2.cap. 3. rentes and yearely reuenues, to vvhich
diuerse

of bleffed Alcantara. diverse persons of qualitie had aduised her. Heansvered, that it was an iniurie to God the authour of Enangelicall counsells, to aske the aduise of men touchinge the observance of them, or to doubt whither or no they were observable. And with all encouraged her to be constant in that feruant desire, she had begun in embracinge holy pouertie. To vvhose counsell she vvillingly obeyed. And after our Lord appeared to her in prayer, and declared, that it yvas his vvill that her Monasteries should be founded in holy pouerty. His letter to her I thinke it not amissse to set dovvne at large, which followeth.



d 2 Aletter

A letter of the bleffed Father FR. PETER DE AL-CANTARA, to the holy Mother THERESA OF lesvs, who demanded his counsell, whither she should founde her Monasteries with rents or no.

HE holy Ghost give you his grace and loue, &c. I received yours, deliuered me by Don GONZALES D'ARANDA. Andam amazed, confideringe your zeale, and pietie: in committinge to the direction of learned lavvyers, that which is no wvayes their profession, or belonginge vnto them: you should doe well to take their advice concerninge the decidinge of a process or of sutes in lavy, and téporall affaires, but in that which concerns perfection of life, vve ought to treate only with those who practise the same. For such as the conscience of eucric one is, such are his exercises and of blessed Alcantara.

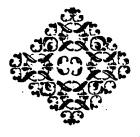
vvorkes. Concerninge the Euangelicall counsells, may I demand whither they be observable or noe? For that the coufells of God cannot be but good, neither can the observance therof seeme difficult, vnless to those, vvho gouerne themselues accordinge to humane prudence, hauinge less confidence in God then they ought. For he, who hath giuen the counsell, vvill consequently giue force and meanes to accomplish the same. And if your zeale and feruour dravve you to embrace the counfells of CHRIST IESVS, observe them with the greatest integritie, and perfe-&ion that possible you can:seeinge they were equally giuen to both sexes. It can not be, but the same meritt and reward will be rendered vnto you, as to others that have truly observed them. And if there be seene any want or necessitie in the Monasteries of poore Religious Women, it is because they are poore against their wills, and not through faulte of their vowe of pouertie, or followinge of the Euangelicall counfells. For I accoumpt not much of their simple pouertie, but of their patient lufferance of the same for the love of God. But I more esteeme of that pouertie

which is defired, procured, and embraced for the same loue. And if I should thinke or otherwise determinatly beleeue, I should not hould my selfe? good Catholique. I beleeue in this, and in all other thinges taught by our bleffed Sauiour, and that his counfells are good and profitable, as proceedinge fro God, and though they oblige not to tinne, they binde neuertheless that man to be more perfect that followeth the then if he had not undertaken them at all. I hold them poore in spirit, which are poore in will, as our Sauiour hath lated, and my selfe proued; how be it I beleeue more from God the of myne owne experience, that those, who by the grace of God, are with all their hearts poore, leade a life most happie as confidinge and hoping in him alone. His diuine Maiestie giue you light to vnderstand this truth, and to practile the same. Beleeue not those that shall tell you the contrarie, for want of light and vnderstandinge, or for not havinge tafted, how fweet our Lord is to these that feare and loue him, renouncing for his sake all vnnecessarie thinges of this world, for they are enemies of the Crosse of Christ, not beleeuing

of bleffed Alcantara.

the glorie which accopanieth the same. Ialso pray our Lord to give you this light, that you be not wantinge in the beleife of this truth, so much manifested. And that you take not counsell, but of the followers of CHRIST IESVS. Although others thinke it sufficient if they observe the thinges they are bound vnto, yet they have not alwayes greater vertue and perfection by their worke. And though the coun-Iell bee good, yet that of our bleffed Saujour is much better. Who knowes what he counselleth and giueth grace to accomplish the same: and in the end reward to those who hope in him and not in rents and goods of the earth.

From Auilathis 14. of April 1562.



4

CHAP.

X. CHAP.

Of his confidence in God almighties providence.

Is admirable confidence in God almighties prouidéce, did accompanie his rigid and Euagelicall pouertie, and it oftentimes miraculoufly appeared both at home and abrode.

(a) Marianus

neris ad eum lojepbi.

(4) He lived some times in the conin eius vita. uent of Sancta Maria de Rosario, which is situated in a woody place, by the river Tentairis, six Italian miles remote from any companie, at all times it was hard to come vnto by reason (b) the way is obloit folius very steepe and crooked, neuertheless dinem, asque it was a place of great deuotio, whether viară anfra- the inhabitats of the country did much Hus difficul- refort; but now by reason of a great accolin arque snowe, the like was not seene in the assueris pa- memorie of man; the Monasterie was teat. Gousage so invironed on every side, that the ord. s. France. Fryars could not goe out to get their in prou. santi victualls, neither could any come to them to bringe prouision. They cried to

heauen

of bleffed Alcantara.

heauen to the Father of the poore, that beinge destitute of all humane aide, he only out of his infinite mercie would be pleased not to forsake them. The holy Father defired them to goe into the church, and fettinge themselves vpon their knees, before the bleffed Sacrament, to pray to God that he would put a remedy to their hard affliction. He with great confidece animated his Bretheren, layinge: Be couragious, Bretheren, God almightie will not be longe, he will come without delay. He had no fooner vttered these wordes, but an other most violent storme of snowe fell so fast, that frustrated their hopes of all humane assistance. But he that conteineth not his anger longe, did not delay to comfort his afflicted childeren. Behold! a little space after the storme was ouer, the porter heard the bell of the gate of the convent to ringe, he went to open the dore, but espied no bodie, he retourned back againe, thinking it to be the winde, that had stirred the bell, or that his fancie feemed to heare the noile when he heard it not; checkinge himlelfe with foolishnes, that he could immagine, that it was possible for any to come to the conuet in so deepe a snowe. W hi-

Whilest he was thus discoursinge with himselfe, it range againe so hard that all heard it, not with standinge it was a great winde. Then retourninge againe to the gate, and openinge it, he found a basket filled full of newe white bread, he looked about to see if he could espy any body, but no creature appeared, for it was a deepe fnowe, where the footinge of any person could not but appeare. He left the basket, and with joy ran backe into the conuent, to carry the good newes vnto the Fryars; who would not believe, vntill the holy Father, commaunded all the Brothers, to goe in manner of processio, to see what God almightic had done for his feruantes: When they came, they found all true, as the porter had related to the But their benefactour did no where visibly appeare. They carried the balked in , and after thankesgiuinge refreshed themselues, with the bread which the Father of heaven had miracolously bestowed vpon them. Vpon which they lived many dayes, vntill the extremity of the season, was past and that they could goe out to begg almes accordinge to their custome.

of blessed Alcantara.

(c) An other time transilinge in the (c) Martine extremitie of the heate of fummer, vpon ibidem . 7. the mountaine vulgarly called Siera Morena, he, with his companion grewe to faint, for wat of some thinge, to quench their thirst, that they were ready to finke under the burtheof their tedious iourny. He said vnto his companion: Brother, let vs betake our selues to prayer the only remedie, to incline the God of mercie to take compassion vpon our miserie. Whilst they were vpon their knees at their prayers, from a thicket came runninge out a mad bull, who made towards them amaine, they lecing themselues in this great danger of their lives, betooke themselves to flight, but the bull persued them ouer hedge and ditch, hard at their heeles, till at last he forced them to a place, where was a fountaine of water, when they came in fight of that, the bull forgettinge his former fury, stoode still like an innocent lambe, he breathed himselfe a while, and went an other way. But they admiringe this great miracle of the omnipotent, that lendeth his willd beafts to teach the poore, refreshed themselves and went on their sourny with alacrity, their soules more

com-

comforted with this vnexpected benefit of God almighties prouidence, then their bodies strengthned with the water which they drunk for their sustenance.

(d) Marianus ibidem.

(d) Hauinge occation to goe from De las Lucuas to Del Pico: as he was in his iournie it began to snowe, which fell so fast that it was not possible for him to goe forward or backward, so that he was enforced to remaine the wholl night in that extremitie of cold and Inowe. But the feruour of his deuotion, wherwith he implored the diuine affistance, caused him to pass ouer the night without tediousnes. But that which was more admirable. Behold! in the morninge when it was day, one might lee, that the snowe did not so much as touch or wett him, but it congeled ouer his heade in a miraculouse maner like a canopie, and of each side too wales of snowe frozen in a curious manner, defended him from the iniurie of the weather, as though he had bene shutt in a beautifull chamber.

These sewe miracles I have set downe collect out of many, which God almightie hath bene pleased to worke by the meanes of his glorious seruant.

(e) As

of bleffed Alcantara.

(e) As testimonies, not only of many (e) Miraculä singular prerogatives of graces exhibited to this holy Father in his owne particular. But also that we admiring these specific folium supraticular. But also that we admiring these specific folium supraticular. But also that we admiring these specific folium supraticular. God almighties proceedings with this blessed man, the truth wherof beinge tone facture, construed by many approued authours. And man grams beneusential que consistate ang. de viile and de viile

CHAP. cred. prope fin

If thou shouldest object vith Caluin in prafat.instit. that the miracles of our Sainctes in the Catholique Church. are partly fained, partly diabolicall. I answer, that the same thinge the Pharifies objected to our bleffed Saujour, that he cast out deuils in Beelzebub the prince of the deuils. More ouer it is most deuilish to blemish the integritie of the ancient Fathers and Saintes, with such an impudent and foule aspersion, as those who wrote the lines of other Saints, as Nycenus of Taumaturgus, S. Athenasius and S. Hierom, of S. Anthonie, Seucrus of S. Martine, S. Gregorie of S. Benet, S. Bernard of S. Malachias, S. Bonauenture of S. Francis. VV hose authoritie if vve should deny no faith or credit is to be given to any historie in the vvorld. VVhich absurditie none, but men out of their vvitts, or blinded vvith malice, vvill admitt S. Augustine confirmeth what I say. His wordes be these: An dices aliquic ista falsa esse miracula, ner fuisse fatta sed mendaciter scripta, quisquis boc dicit, si de bis rebus negat, omnino vellis literis elle tredendu, potest etia dicere nec Deos vilos curare mortalia.De ciuit. Dei l. 10.c. 18. Quadă fast anon nisi à proteruientibus negar? Possunt, et sunt miracula fasta à Sylvestro cord Constantino tam in curatione lepra eius, quă în disputatione eius contraludeos: qua fa-Ha tanquã celeberima mundu non latuerant. Scot. in prol.q. a B.II.

CHAP. XI.

Of his knowledg in holy Scripture, and of his preachinge.

E was so well versed in the holy Scripture, that for the most part, he could repeate it without booke, and in explicatinge it, he was so cleare, and with all so mouinge that one might iudge his learninge, to be rather supernaturally infused in prayer, then naturally gotten, by the ordinarie meanes of (2) o quans studie (a) for he quickly learned what below of fer- he was taught seeinge he had the holy whi Dens Ghost for his master. He wrote some magister est, spirituall workes, wherin he had a quamcità dif- speciall gift of God almightie, both cetare B. L. coto direct those who tend vnto perfor ide Pe ... fection, in their iourny towardes heaven, as also to inflame their wills to aspire to that eternall good. In this particulare science, he was cheifly eminent and wrote profitable and learned tracks of this matter.

of ble [fed Alcantara.

He had such a rare gift in preaching: so inuective against sinne, and withall so comfortable, to those who were pullinge their seete out of the snare of vices, that God almighty was pleased to worke by his meanes, many wonderfull effects in the soules

of his auditory.

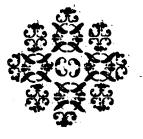
In the citty of Abula there was a young gentleman, that was giuen vnto, and as it were buried in all the sportes and vanities of this wicked world. But especially in the vild and pernicious loue of wanton wome. Cominge in his pompe vpo a festivall day of that place, by chaunce mett the holy Father, who when he vnderstood of his corriualls the qualitie and sanctity of him, went towardes him with others to falute him with great respect, and withall begged his prayers, but God knoweth, with what intention, for he still obstinately remained in his filthy desires. But the holy Father in his fermon touched the soare of his soule vnto the quick (yet not reuealinge any person)in so much, that the holy Ghost did so worke with him, that this prodigall child vnderstandinge the Father was to goe away from that place, the next day,

made

made haft, to gett pen and inke to write his fins, the next day cometh to the Father, and saluteth him, giuinge him a (b) The longe (b) scroule of his finfull life, and younge mã desireth him for the love of God, that out of hu- he would vouchsafe to pray for him, mility ma-that God would have mercie vpon his his fins! to foule, and that he would not punish the holy Fa- him for euer accordinge vnto his defersher out oftes. The holy Father received his pathe Sacra-per, and promifed that he would pray confession. for him. So each departed their way. But he had scarce turned his backe, but the Father earnestly begged of God almightie his convertion, of which he was prefently sensible: for before he came home, the spirit of God did so inflame him, that he abiured his former conversation, and loathed the pleafures, that before he loued so much, and beinge retourned to his house, Hunge off his braue cloathes, toare his chaine from his neck, and vested himselfe in meane and country cloathes, without any shame appearinge lo to all the world, all admiringe the suddaine chaunge of the right hand of the highest; and as afterward he liued well, perseueringe to the end, so he dyed happily; he dispersed his patrimonie,

of bleffed Alcantara. monie amongst the poore, and built many monasteries and hospitalls, as testimonies of his conversion.

He had such efficacy in his preasure hinge, that many common Women, drawne with the sweetnes of his spirit, chaunged their fordid and bale manner of liuinge into holy and pious conucra lation. Others as well of the nobility, as amongst the meaner fort of people, renouncing all pleasures for the love of I E s v s, shrowded themselves in cloisters, where they might be secure from the contagion of worldly vanities. And many confecratinge their virginitie to their celestiall spoule, like lillies amogst thornes, perseuered in the open world' amidst the dangers therof, with immoueable constancie.



CHAP.

XII. CHAP.

Of his religious zeale and of his death.

HE Reverend effectme of his vertues encreased so much, euen in his owne Cloister, that there many times (enioyned by obedience) performing the office of Guardian with great integrety, was at length by the suffrages of all the Fathers, elected twice Provinciall of the province of S. GABRIEL, where he mad a hapepie and notable reformation. But after his three yeares expired, he betooke himselfe againe to his poore heremitage, where he fatted his soule with sacred contemplation, perseueringe in readinge the ancient Fathers, watchinges, fastinges, and regulare discipline. But the more he hid himselfe in these obscure places, the more the fame of his learninge and saincutie did shine abroade. And in testimonic that God almightie would not have this resplendat light, to be put vnder a bushell, but to

of blessed Alcuntara.

be set vpon a candlestick, to give light to others, to followe his glorious footsteppes, and to the end, that he might not only enrich his owne foule with the treasures of vertue, but also instruct others, both by his doctrine and examble, to aspire to heaven, the sea Apostolique did vouchsafe to honoure him with a committion, by vertue of which, he should erect, and foude a newe prouince vnder the title of S. Ioseph. Which before his death, he was so happie to ice, not only multiplied in number of conventes, and religious men (by his great labour and trauaile) but also to be perfectly established in regulare obferuance, and true monasticall disci-

At last, the number of his meritts beinge compleat, his just master, whom he had ferued to longe with great fidelitie, was pleafed to call him, to reward his labours with an eternall crowne of glorie, and to reape in joy what he had fowed in teares. He fell fick in the Conuent of S. Andre vve de mon-TE ARENO, where God almightie vouchsafed to let him knowe the hower of his death. And before his departure he called his bretheren, exhor-

tinge

tinge them to perseuerance in that happie course, which they had vndertaken for the loue of God, and the fauinge of their owne foules. He the received vpon his knees with aboundance of teares the facred Viaticum with fingulare deuotion, and a little after, his infirmitie increasinge, he received also the Sacrament of extreame Vnction. The bleffed Virgin and S. I o HN (to whome all his life time he was verie much deuout) appeared to him, and gaue him assurance of his faluation. Which euer-comfortable newes, he no sooner understood, but his heart was rauished with ioy, and his mouth filled with gladnes, and out of that aboundance of content breaketh out into these wordes of the Prophet (2)Pfal. 112. DAVID: (a) Letatus sum in his qua dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus: I hauc reioyced in those thinges that are faied vnto me: we will goe into the house of our Lord. In fine the happie hower beinge come, he yealded his bleffed Ioule into the handes of his maker, and by the pailage of a temporall death, trauailed to an eternall life the 18. of October, upon the feast of S. LVEB 1562. the 63. yeare of his age, and the 47. of his entrance into holy Religion.

His body after his death became more (b) sum puebeutiful, shininge with great claritic, rulus Æshiops and fendings fourth five readours. The inutilis peniand lendinge fourth sweete odours. The this asque conpeople from all partes flocked to be- sraffus ad ilhold this sacred spectacle, and greedie lius sepulere after to rich a prey, clipped peeces of his ab eins bera habite, which they conserued as holy dam Martini reliques. His bodie was no sooner in the de Friars ac

of blessed Alcantara.

graue, but his sepulchre began to be re- prafati appidi nouned with many (b) miracles which acole, eddefor breuity fake I omitt to speake of be- Bus effet eins

cause I would not be too tedious to the meritis Deo deuout reader. oper tute inte-

gra softitatirestituitur. Et Leonora Gonsalua einfdem eppidi inquilina à paralifi qua granisime Laborabat adeins quoque sepulcrum liberatur. Franc. Gonzaga 3. parte Chron. ordinis Seraphici: Vide plura apud Ioannem de Santta Maria in Vita B. Alcant. c.30.

opt. max. id

(c) His foule was no fooner out of (c) In eius his body, but presently he appeared to vita cap. 27.

S. TERESIA, to bringe vnto her frant babent the joy full tidinges of his receivinge in- bonitate meto heauen. Many times after he appea- ritoria glorie red to her, and once amongst the rest ra, neca nobis he saied unto her: O HAPPY PE-fed à Deo. NANCE THAT (d) DE-For our SERVED SVCH A GLO-vvorkes are RIOVS RECOMPENCE! nin, atoo-

(e) Hap- feldrefpeat. I. As they are in ther proper nature & dignity. 2. As they have Gods promise & acceptance. If vve considerthem in the first sence, so they doe not merite, saluation: if in the fecod, they doe, This I fay, to answere the objection The life

of ignorant (e) Happie indeede was his penance, that tes, vvho chauged sorrowes into pleasures: mourmight take ninge into mirth: teares into ioyes, and a momentarie crosse into an eternall occasion this word crowne. The same blessed THEREs I A (as we have faid before) affirmed, (deserved) and who that she received more comfort, and consolation from him after his death, vve so di- then in time of his life. And that his gnifie our foule flewe immediately to heauen, without any passage by purgatorie. All that therby these thinges beinge well examined, to merite and verified, by persons, without all heauen, ab- exceptio, worthy of creddit, his holines, ftractinge for the glorie of God, honour of the from the Saint, and benefit of the faithfull, merites of wouch for de proposico him bearified. our blessed vouchsafed to pronouce him beatissed to the end, that as he had a perfect Sauiours paffion truition of glorie, in the Church triumvyhen it is phant, so he should want no praise or certaine, our reverse in the Charles at the Head doctrine is, reuerence, in the Church militant. He that the cheifestreason of merite is founded in Gods promise, not mans vvorke, and our vvorkes, so to merite, and to be ennobled, chei fly by vertue of ther principall agent our blessed Sauiours passion. Conradus Klingius de loci com l.I. c 35. Stapelton. controuerf. l.10. c.12. Bellarm.l.1. de instificat. 6.21. & l.5-c.11 cum comuni Dostorum. (e) If the conversion of finners, and of greuious finners, be fo pleafinge to almighty God, that the Angels of heaven doe reioyce at it accordinge to S. Bernard Sepernas beaterum manfiones attingit panitentia odor (ita vt teste ipfa ver tate) magnum gaudium fit itter Angelos Dei Super van pectatore punitentiam agente:

of blessed Alcantara.
was beatissed the 18. of April 1622. and gaudets pendinis office is celebrated in the Conuentes tentes, pushlanimes confined of his order the 19, of October.

FINIS.

gandets pendtentes, pufillanimes confortamini: vo bis dico ques nuper connerfos de faculo, & à vijs ve-Siris prauis recedentes, ex-

cepit mox amaritudo animi punitentis. Ac velut recentium adbac vulnerum dolor nimius excruciat ac perturbat. Secura manas ventra distillant myrrba amaritudinem in salubrem banc vultiunem, quia cor contritum, & humiliatum Deus nom despiciet. D. Bernard. Super Cantica serm. 10. I say if such a conuerfion be so pleasinge to God, hovve glorious may vve siudge this holy Fathers penance to be, vvho from his cradle to his grave, lived innocently and austerly? so that vve may justly say of him as the Church of S. solm, Antra deserviceneris sub annis, cinium turmas sugiens petili, ne leui saltem maculare vitam, samine posses.

BENEDICTVS DEVS.

BEA-



BEATIFIC ATIO

B. P.

DE ALCANTARA.

Gregorius Papa XV. ad perpetuam rei memoriam.

🖺 N. Sede Principis Apostolorum nullis licet nostris suffragantibus meritis à Domino constituti, pijs stidelium wish, quibus virtutum Dominus in seruis suis bonorificatur, libenter annuimus, eaque fauoribus prosegu mar opportunts. Cum itaque instantibus non solum clare memoriæ Philippo III. & tharißime in Chr. ste silie nostro Philippo W. Hispaniarum Regibus Catholicis, sed etiam ferè omnibus Hispania regnis, venerabiles fratres nostri S.R.E. Cardinales sauris ritihus præpositi, de mandato nostro causam serui Dei Petri de Alcantara, Ordinis Min firittiorus observantia Discalceatorum nuncupatorum, ac Provincia S. losephi eiusdem Ordinis F undatork, iuxta seriem trium causarum Palatij Apostolici Audito. rum ad effectum canonizationis examinauerint, ac multis desuper babica feßionibus, reference diletto filio nostro Marco Antonio, siculi S. Enfebij Presbyter a Cardinale Gozzadino nuncupato, plenissime constare de validitate processuum, fama san Titatis, side, Invitate, caterisque Virtutibus non in genere solum, sed etiam in recie, retinuiarum ac sepulchri veneratione, plurinsisque tandem miraculis pronunciauerint, censuerint que posse nos quandocumque voluerimus, eundem Dei seruum, iuxta Catholica Ecclefie ritum, Sanstum, atque in celu regnantem declarare, ommibus que fidelibus solemni canonizatione proponere venerandu. Pralitus vero Philippus IV. Rev., & diletti filij Minister Cemeralis, & Fratres Ordinis prædicti nobis bumiliser Supplicari fecerint.

feceriut, ve donec ad canonizationem dicti Petri deueniatur, idem Petrus Beatus nuncupari ac de eo tanquam de Confessore non Pontifice Missam ac officium vt infra celebrari & recitari respettiue possint, indulgere de benignitate Apostolica dignavemur. Nes supplicationibus huiusmodi inclinati de corundem Cardinalismo consilio, ve idem Dei seruus Petrus de Alcantara in posterum Beatus nuncupari atque de co tan quam de Confessore non Pontifice die 19. Octob. qua ipsius obitus memoria celebrabitur vbique terrarum ab vninerfa religione Minorum obseruantium verinfque sexus respective Missam celebrari atque officium recitari posfint. In oppido verò de Alcantara illius diecests vbi natus atque in altero de Arenas Abulenfis diecefis vois corpus einschen requiescere accepimus, omnibus tam regularibus quam secularibus Clericis subritu tamen semiduplici idem omnino liceat. Ac demum in Prouincia prædicta S. lofephi, cuius autor extitit, de ipsis diffi Ordinis Discalceatorum fratribus, etiam cum offena veluti de Patrono , officium pariter ac Missa iuxta Breuiarijac Miffalis Romani Rubricas celebrari possint, Apostolica auctoritate tenore prasentiam perpetao concedimus & indulgemus. Nas obst antibus constitutionibus o ordinationibus Apostolicis, ceterifque contrarijs qui bufcunque Volumus autem ve prafentiam transumptis etiam impressis manu alicuius Notarij Publici subscriptis , & sigllo persona indignitate Ecclesiastica conftitua munitis eade prorfus fides adbibeatur que prasentibus adbiberetur si forent 'exhibiti vel ostenfa. Datum Roma apud S. Petrano Subannulo Piscatoris die 18. Aprilis 1622. Pontificatus melles anno secundo.

> Copia vera desumpta ex tomo 4. Bullarij Laertij Cherubini impresso Romz an. 1631.

> > FA

FACVLTAS SVPERIORIS.

Ibrum verè pium Meditationum B. PETRI DE ALCANTARA, Ordinis Fratr. Min. in linguam Anglicanam à religioso Patre Fr. Ægidio VVil. loughby, eiusdem Ordinis Prouinciæ nostræ Angl.filio, fideliter translatum, per omnia concordantem exemplari Latino inuenèrunt RR. PP. Theologi, quibus à nobis commissa fuit eiusdem examinatio, ideoque prælo dignum censui, ad instructionem populi Christiani, qui in tot controuersijs sidei, his pijs maiorum nostrorum exercitijs penè destituitur. Habet insuper adiunctam vitam ipsius B. PETRI è varijs authoribus à prædicto Patre Ægidio collectam, de qua idem sit iudicium. Dat. in nostra residentia Londini 1. Aprilis 1632.

> Fr. IOANNES GENINGES, Minister Provincialis.

APPROBATIO.

TARA, in linguam Anglicanã à Religioso Patre Fr. Ægidio V Villoughby, Ordinis Minorú S. FRANCISCI translatæ, vti & vita dicti B. Patris ab eodem auctore ex probatis auctoribus collecta, lucem videre merentur. Actum hac 10. Aprilis 1632.

HENRICUS CALENUS, S. Theol. Licent. Archipr. Brux. Librorum Cenfor.

ERRATA.

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Pag.	Line.	Faults.	Correlled.
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GOLDEN TREATISE,

MENTAL PRAIER.

FR. PETER DE ALCANTARA,
of the Seraphicall Order of
S. Francu.

CHAP. I.

N this Chapter wee will briefly fett downe the fruite of prayer and meditation, that men confidering the benefit of them, may be incited with a prompte and more willing mind to frequent these holy exercises.

It is most certaine, that the malice of our owne heartes, is the principall cause that hindreth vs from attaining to our beatitude

and

Bl. Alcantara, and enerlasting happines, because it maketh vs flovve to godly actions, dull to vertuous exerciles, and luggesteth a greater difficultie in them then there is, which if it vyere not, a man might vvalke vvithout any molestation in the way of vertue, and at length without labour attaine to his defired end. Hence it is, that the Apostle sayth: I delight in the lavve of God acording to the invvard man: but I see another lavve in my members repugnant to the lavve of my mind, and captivateinge mee in the lavve of sinne.

The effica-

This therfore is the prime roote and cie of de- cause of all our miseries, against which there is no remedie more conuenient, and efficacious, then deuocion, which acording to S. Thomas, is nothing else, but a certaine promptitude and facilitye of the minde to doe well. It doth exclude from our minde this tedious difficultie, and maketh vs with alacritye applie our selfes to vertuous actes. Therfore not without cause wee may tearme it spiritual food, recreative and heavenly deawe, a pleafant instinct and supernatural affection of the holy Ghost, which doth so roborate and transforme the hartes of men, that it doth begett in them a new gust and sealing of spiritual thinges, and on the contrary a tedious loathing of worldly vanities.

Day.

of Meditation.

Daylye experience manifefreth this particular vnto vs. For wee lee the foules of those who arise from profound and deuout prayer, to bee Strengthened with admirable resolutions, adorned with newe graces, and replenished with firme purpoles of amendment of life, and frequenting pious exerciles, they burne with an ardent defire of feruing and louing him with their wholl heart, whom in their prayer they found the God of all goodnes and benignitye, defiring to fuffer any griculous and burdensome crosse what locuer it bee; yea to sheadd their bloud for his fake. To conclude, prayer is a bath, an open place, a bedde of pleasure, wherein the soule recreateth and refresheth her felfe.

If you aske mee, what beethe chiefest By what meanes to attaine vnto this heroicall ver-meanes tue of deuotion. I answere with the same is getter. Doctour, that it is gotten by ferious meditation and contemplation of heavenlye thinges. For the ruminating of these in the soule, with a more attentive and profound consideration, doth begett in the will that disposition which wee call denotio, which effectually rouzeth and pricketh a man forward to enery good worke. For this cause the exercise of prayer and meditation was frequent and familiar to men of

of Christ Esp.73.

and maketh vs fitt for all others, and asit were with spurres pricketh vs forward to the performance of every good worke. I call S. Bonaventure to witnesse what she Med. I say: his wordes are these. The inestimaof the life ble vertue of prayer is able to obtaine all good, and remoue all hurtfull things. If thou will patiently endure aduerfity; beca man of prayer: If thou wilt ouercome tribulatio and temptatios, bee a ma of prayer: If thou wilt traple vpo thy peruerle inclina tios;bee a mã of prayer:If thou wilt knowe the deceiptes of Sathan, and avoid the; bee a mã of prayer. If thou wilt live joy fully in the worke of God, and trace the way of labour and affliction; bee a mã of prayer. If thou wilt exercise thy selfe in a spiritual course, and not walke acording to the desires of the flesh; bee a man of prayer. If thou wilt put to flight thy vaine and trifling fancies; bee a man of prayer. If thou wilt fatt thy foule with holy thoughtes, good defires, feruour, and deuotion; bee a man of prayer. If thou wilt establish thy heart with a manly Spirit, and constat purpose in the service of God; bee a man of prayer. To conclude, if thou wilt roote

BL ACAMERIA fanctity as judging if the caliest meanes to

copasse deuotio, which although it be but

one only simple vertue, yet it disposeth

of Meditation. out vice, and bee indued with vertues: bee a man of prayer. In it is receased the Vnation of the holy Ghost, which teaceth all thinges. Also if thou wilt clime vp to the toppe of contemplation, and enjoye the fweet embracinges of thy beloued spouse: be a man of prayer. For by the exercise of prayer, wee come to that contemplation and taste of heauenly thinges. Thou seest, of what great power and vertue, prayer is. For the Confirmation of all which, omitting the Testimonie of holy Scriptures, let this bee an euident proofe vnto the, that by dayly experience, wee heare and fee illiterate and simple persons, to have attained the forelayd and greater thinges by the vertue of prayer. Thus S. Bonaventure.

I beceech you, can there bee found a richer treasure or a more fertile fielde defired? Heare an other Doctour no lesse for Religion and landitye, who vpon the lame matter fayth: By prayer the foule is cleansed from sinne, replenished with charity, confirmed in fayth, roborated inand refreshed in Spirit. Prayer estabilitheth the inward man, pacifieth the heart, knoweth the trueth, conquereth temptations, expelleth forrowe, reneweth the lences, stirreth vp languishing vertue, putteth to flight tepidity, and skoureth the rust

rust of vices. In prayer the quicke sparkles of celestial desires are incessantly sent forth from the burning coales of divine love. The priviledges of prayer are rare, the prevogatives admirable. Prayer vnlocketh the gates of Heaven, manifesteth divine secrets and alwaies findeth free accesse to the eares of God. I will adde no more, for those thinges which have alreadie bene sayd, aboundantly expresse the fruites of this holy exercise.

CHAP. II.

Of the matter of prayer.

AVINGE take notice of the vtility of prayer and meditation, wee will nowe declare the matter about which meditation is to bee converfant: for seeing it is ordained to this end, that the soule of him that meditateth, may bee excited to the seare and love of God, and the keeping of his commaundementes: the matter of meditation ought to bee such, as doth next dispose to this end and scope. And although every creature, and the whole Scripture it selfe bee able to minister

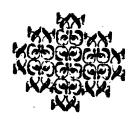
of Meditation. nister this matter vnto vs, yet speaking generally, the misteries of our holy fayth, contained in the Creed, are most efficacious and profitable to attaine vnto this end. For these on the one side, cotaine God Almighties benefittes, the later judgement, the paines of hell, and the glorie of Paradile; all which, like sharpe prickes doe spurre vs on to the love and feare of God: On the other side, they comprehende the life and Passion of our Lord and Saujour, which is the springe and fountaine of all our good. These two thinges contained in the Apostolicall Creed, for the most part yeilde matter of meditatio, and therfore I thinke prayer and meditation ought chiefly to be conuersant about the, although every one in particular may have certaine pointes, which may more specially inflame and excite the foule to the love and feare of God.

Beeing therfore perswaded with this reason, that I might the better conduct younge beginners, and vntrained soldiars into this way of mentall prayer, and that I might giue vnto them altogether prepared, and (as it were to little children) forechowed matter of meditation, I have selected two kindes of meditatios, almost take out of the misteries of our faith, the one serving for the morning, the other for the

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euening: that as the body is comonly fedd with two meales; soe the soule may be strenthened and nourished with two spiritual refections, by the meditation and confideration of heavenly things. Some of these are of the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord IEevs CHRIST, others of the misteries of our fayth, as I sayd before; But those who can not have the opportunity, to meditate twice aday, after this manner, they may vse them, to wit; they may take to their consideration the 7. former Meditations in the one weeke, and the latter in an other weeke; or they may chiefly insist vpon those of the life and Pathon of our Saujour: although the other be not to be neglected, especially in the begining of a soules conversion, to whom they are proper, when the feare of God, contrition and horrour of sinne, is chiefly to be regarded and fought after.



Here

Here followe the 7. former Meditations.

A Meditation for Munday,

His day thou shalt call to memory I thy finnes, and shalt exercise thy selfe in the knowledge of thy felfe, that on the one fide, thou maiest truly ponder the greatnesse of thy offences, and on the other fide, thou maiest looke into thy basenes, and thy owne nothing, and acknowledge that all the good which thou hast, is from God. This confideration will gett thee submission of mind, and true humility the mother of all vertues.

First therfore waigh with thy selfe, the multitude of the sinnes of thy former life, and namely those sinnes which thou hast comitted whe as yet thou wert not illuminated with the divine splendour to know God Almightie rightly. These if thou dost examine with exquisite diligence, thou wilt finde to bee fo many in number, that they will exceede the haires of thy head: for in this time thou leadest the life of a heathen, ignorant of the divine powre, and as it were without any knowledge of his facred Deity.

Then

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Then consider how thou hast behaued thy selfe about the tenne commaundemets and the 7. deadly sinnes, and thou wilt sinde, that there is no precept of Almightie God, which thou hast not violated, nor any mortal sinne, into which thou hast not fallen, eyther in thought, word, or deed. Aster that, call to minde God Almighties benefittes, which he hath bestowed vpoint thee in the whole course of thy former life, and see whether thou canst give a good accompte of them or no.

Tell mee I pray the, how thou hast confumed the dayes of thy infancy, thy youth and the flower of thy manly age? how hast thou employed thy 5. exteriour senses, and inward faculties of thy soule, given vnto thee by God, only to bee bussed about his holy service, and the contemplation of heavenly thinges, what hast thou turned thine eyes vnto, but to beholde vanityes? what have thine eares list ned after but lies and tales? what hath thy tongue vttered but mnrmuringes, and blasphemous speaches? what hath thy tast and feeling bene delighted in, but wanton pleasures? how hast thou vsed the remedy of the holy Sacramentes, giuen vnto thee, as a singular gifte? what thanksgiving hast thou restored for soe many benefittes which he hath

of Meditation. heaped upon thee? what alacsity half thou vsed to satisfie his holy inspirations? how hast thou spent thy health of body and naturall forces? how half thou dispensed thy goodes of fortune ? what good vie haft thou made of the commodity, and proferred occasions to liue well? what care hast thou had of thy neighbours welfare? what workes of mercye, or of bountye, hast thou done vnto them ? what wilt thou answere in that terrible daye of iudgement, when thou must render a seuere accompte of all these thinges ! o withered tree destinated to eternal flames, except thou doest penance! what excuse wilt thou then frame, when thou must give an accompte of energy yeare, of energe month, of euery weeke, of euery daye, of euery

moment?
Thirdly consider, those sinnes, which thou hast every day committed, after God Almighty hath illuminated and opened the eyes of thy soule to meditate vpon heavenly thinges: and thou shalt finde that the old Adam hath yet borne a great sway in thy actions, and that sinfull roote to have procreated in the, many and perverse habits.

Diligently ponder, how vagratefull thou hast bene to God Almighty, how vanind-

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mindfull of his benefites, how contrary thou hast behaued thy selfe against his holy inspirations, how southfull and remisse in his divine service: in which thou scarce hast cuer vsed due alacrity and diligence, or fuch purity of intention as it is requisite, nay hast thou not served God for worldly

respectes and commodity?

Enter into consideration how rigid thou art to thy neighbour, and how indulgent to thy selfe how thou louest thy owne will, how thou adhearest to thy senfuality, how chary of thy honour, and of euery thing that belongeth vnto thee. Waigh well with thy selfe, how every day thou growest more arrogant, more ambitious, more vaine, more prone to anger, more desperatly bent so malice, more prone to delightes and pleasures, more mutable, more vnconstant, more propense to carnal sinnes, and a greater louer of earthly vanities. Consider thy inconstacy in good, thy indifcretion in wordes, imprudence in deedes, in heigh and difficult matters pufillanimity sometimes, and often audacious

In the fourth place, after thou hast take notice of the number and order of thy finnes, paule vpon them a while in thy minde, and waigh cuery one in the ballance of due confideration, that thou maiest perceaue with what mifery thou art on every fide enuironed. Which that thou maiest the better doe; consider these three circumstances in the sinnes of thy former life. First against whom thou hast sinned. 2. Why thou hast sinned. 3. How thou hast sinned. Which if thou doest diligently penctrate, thou wilt finde that thou hast offended God, whose maiestie and goodnes is immense, who hath obliged man vnto him with so many benefites, as there are landes

of Meditation.

in the sea, or drops of water in the Ocean. Why hast thou sinned, or what violent occasio hath enforced thee to any cryme? alitle momentary pride: a foule representation of pleasure; some smale commoditye placed in thy fight, and oftentimes, no occation at all, but euil custome, and mere

contempt of God.

But alas how hast thou sinned ? with fuch facility, with fuch notable audacity, with so litle feare and conscience, yea with such security and pleasure, as though thou hadest to doe with no other then a wooden God, who regardeth not these sublunary thinges, neyther understandeth or feeth any thing, what is done upon the face of the earth. Is this the honour due vnto his supreme maiesty? is this a remuneration

tion of his benefittes? does thou with fuch services requite his whippinges, his buffettinges, and pretious bloud sheadd vpon the Crosse for thy sake? o wicked wretch that hast offended so great a mainsty, more miserable, that for so sleight a cause, and most deplorable, that thou art not sensible of thy vtter Ruine; that after sinne thou searest not damnation, and so necessarily.

neglectest to doe penance.

Moreouer it is very profitable, to infift a while vpon this confideration, and that thou esteeme thy selfe nothing, and certenly perswade thy selfe that thou hast nothing of thy selfe but sinne; all other thinges to be the giftes of God Almighties bounge. For it is most euident, that all our good, both of grace and nature doth flowe from him: for he is the Author of the grace of predestination (which is the fountaine and originall of all others) of the grace of our vocation, of concomitant and perfeucring grace, and of the grace of euerlasting life. What hast thou then, that thou canft boaft of, but finne? only this nothing thou canst attribute to thy selfe, all other things belong to God: Whence thou maiest clearly and manifestly percease what he is, and what thou are, and hence comecture, what disfidence thou oughtest to

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haue in thy felfe, and what confidence in God; to loue him, and to glorifie thy felfe in him, and not in thy felfe, but so farr as his grace doth freely operate in thee.

These thinges being digested with attetiue meditation, as much as thou canst, vrge thy selfe, to a contempt of thy selfe: imagine that thou art like an emprie reede shaken with euery blast of wind, without gravity, without vertue, without constancy, without stabilytic, and finally without any thing. Thinke thy selfe to bee a Lazarus foure dayes dead, a stincking and abhominable carcasse, swarming with vermin, so filthy that passers by are forced to stoppe their nostrels, least they smel such a nastye fauour. Beleeue me, thou hart more abhominable, before God and his holy Sainces. Thinke thy felfe vnworthy to lifte vp thine eyes to Heauen; to tread vpon the earth, or that the creatures should scrue thee; yea not worthy to eat bread or breath in the aire. Cast thy selfe with the sinfull woman in the Ghospel, at our Blessed Sauiours feete: presenting thy selfe vnto him with a cofuled and blushing countenace, no otherwise the the woma take in adultery before her husband, and with inward lorrowe, and true compunction, begg pardon of thy finnes: that for his infinite

mercy and goodnes, he would vouchfafe to receive thee againe into his favour, and that thou mainst dwell in his howse for euer.

A Meditation for Tweefdaye.

His day thou shalt meditate vpon the miseries of the life of man, out of which consideration, thou wilt take notice of worldly vanities, and learne how much the glorie of them ought to be despised, seeing they are built vpo so weake a foundation, as our fading life, whose miseries, because they be innumerable, thou shalt take but seauen of the principall for thy Meditation.

First therfore consider the shortnes of the life of man, being restrained within the limittes of threescore and ten or sourscore yeares, whatsoeuer the ouerplus be, it is but labour and sorrow, as the Prophet speaketh: Out of this time, if thou does subtract thy infancy, which time thou livedst rather the life of a beast, then a man; the time that thou spendest in sleepe, for then thou art deprived of the vse of reason, which only distinguisheth man from other creatures, and thou wilt finde thy life to bee farr shorter then ever thou didst ima-

gine. This time if thou doest compare with the eternity of the world to come, thou wilt find it to be lesse, then a moment. Coniecture then the foolish madnes of the louers of this worlde, who that they might enione one only momentary pleasure of this transitory life, doe not feare to expose them selfes to the losse of eternitye.

Then take to thy confideration the vncertainty of this life (which is a second miferie) for not only it is most short, but the brevitie it selfe is most vncertaine and doubtful. For who is there, that attaineth to the age of three or foure score?how ma ny are extinguished at their very entrance into the worlde? how many perish in the flowere of their youth? You knowe not fayth CHRIST, whe your Lord is to come: whether in the first watch or 2. or 3. or in the cocke crowing. Which that thou maiest the better understand, call to minde especially thy domesticke friends, and other men placed in dignity and authority. whom inexorable death hath at diverse ages (lome yonger, some older) suddenly taken out of this worlde, irritating their vaine and longe-life-promiseing hopes.

Ponder 4. the inconstancy and mutability of this present life, neuer continuing in one state. The disposition of the body often

Bl. Alcantara changeth, not alwaies enjoying health, but subject to frequent diseases: but if thou reflect vpon the minde, thou shalt fee that like the troubled Ocean it is toffed vp and downe with the boisterous windes of her vntamed passions, inordinate appetites, fluctuatinge cogitations, which vpo euery occasion doe disturbe her quiet. Consider lastly, the instability of the goods of fortune (as they tearme them) to how many chaunces they are obnoxious, neuer suffering the temporall substance to stand still in one stay, therby to make men happy and prosperous; but like a wheele is turned vp fide-downe, without any intermission. Consider also the continual motio of our life, neuer restinge night nor day, but goeth forward without ceasinge, and every day more and more wasteth it selfe, so that it may not vnfitly be compared to a candle; which by little and little confumeth it felfe, and when it giueth the clearest light, the sooner it approcheth vnto its end, also to a flower, which springeth vp in the morninge, at noone fadeth, and at night wholly withereth away. Which God Almightie speakinge by the Prophet Isaze, of this mutation, excellently shaddoweth in these wordes: Omnis caro fenum, & omnis gloria eius quasi flos agri. All flesh is hay, and all the

of Meditation. the glorie of it is like a flower of the feild.

Which words S. HIEROME expoundinge laith, if one doth rightly consider the fraylty of the flesh, and that we growe and decrease accordinge to the moments of howres, neuer remaininge in one state, and that the very thinge we now speake, doe, or write, passeth a way as part of our life, he will not doubt to confesse that all flesh is hay, and the glorie therof as a flower, or the greene medowes. He that is now an infant will by and by be a little childe, then presently a younge man, growinge towardes his decreped age, through vacertaine lealons, and before he hath contented him felte in youth, fealeth old age to come vpon him. The beutifull woman which did drawe after her wholl troops of gallats in her youth, her face is now fourrowed with deformed wrincles, and she that before was a pleasure, is now vgly to behold.

Consider 5. how deceiptfull this life is, Hieron. 7. (which is the worst condition of all delu- 11 Com. dinge the louers of the world with a mile in Ifa. rable blindnes) for we thinke it amiable, when in it selfe it is vgly: we thinke it fweet, when it is full of gall and bitternes: when it is circumscribed with in the shor-

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test limits, we thinke it longe. When it is full of misery, we thinke it so happie, that there is no danger, no hazard that me will not expose themselves vnto, for the conferuation of it, yea with the losse of eternall glorie, when they doe not feare to comit those sinnes which make them vn-

worthie of so great felicitie.

Consider sixthly, that besides the breuitie, and other fore-mentioned conditios. that small time wherin we live, is subject to innumerable miseries both spirituall and corporall. That it may well be called a torrent of teares, and oceane of infinite molestations. S. Hierome reporteth how XERXES that potent kinge, who ouer turned mountaines, and made bridges ouer the leas, when from a high place, he beheald that infinite multitude of men, and his innumerable army, he wept, to thinke that not one of those men there present, should be aliue after a hudred yeares. And presently addinge, ô that we could but ascend vnto such a turret, to behold the wholl earth under our feete, then would I manifest vnto thee, the ruins of the world, nation rifinge against nation, and kingedomeagainst kingdome, fome tormented, others flaine, some drowned, others led into captiuitie. Here marryinge, heer mourof Meditation. 21 mourninge, some borne, others dyinge, some aboundinge in wealth, others begginge. And not only the mighty army of XERXES but all the men of the world, in a short space to be turned to dust and ashes.

Take notice a little, of the labours and infirmities of the body, the cogitations and passions of the minde: the diuerse dangers in euery, state and all scasons threatninge the ruine of man: and thou wilt euery day, more clearly vnderstand the miseries of this life, that when thou seeft, what is to be hoped for in this world, thou maiest with a noble courrage contemne it.

The last of all these miseries, is death, both in respect of soule or bodie, a thinge most terrible: for in this moment the body is disrobed of all the thinges, in this world. And the soule in this point receiveth the joyfull or searefull sentence of eternity.

These thinges well considered, thou wilt be instructed how short and miserable the glorie of this world is, and how it ought to be hated and despised of thee.



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A Meditation for VVeddensday.

His day thou shalt meditate on death: the confideration of vwhich is very profitable to attaine vnto true wisedome, to beate downe sinne; and to excite men timely to cast vp their accompts which they are to make in the latter day.

Consider first the vncertainty of that hower vwherin death is to seaze vpon thee, thou knowest not the day, nor the place, nor the state vwher in it shall finde thee: only thou believest that thou must die, for other thinges thou art vwholly ignorant of; except that it oftentimes setteth vpon a man vwhen he little dreameth of it, and thinketh it to be furthest of.

Consider secondly, that greiuious separatio, which shall be at the point of death, not only from every thinge of this present life, wherin thou tookest content, but also between the soule and body, whose society was most anciet, most louinge and deare. If a man taketh it greiuiously to be banished, to be thrust out of his native Soile, and to be deprived of that aire wherin he first breathed, although he should carry all others, his dearest thinges with him, how are more bitterly would he take that general

nerall exile, veherin he must be veraned from all exordly thinges, his hovese, his meanes, his father, his mother, his childre, his freinds, vecertaine vehether he him selfe must goe. Then shall he be deprived of the light and the commerce of all hu-

mane creatures?

If the oxe vvhen he is distoyned from his fellower with vvhome he was wont in the same yoake to be coupled, with bellowinge doth express his forrowe, what sobbs, what sights wilt thou setch, when thou shalt perceive thy selfe to be violently pulled from these thy confederats.

Consider also that anxiety vuhervuith the minde of the dyinge is tormented, vuhen abstracted from al corporall busines, he only thinketh vuhat shall become of his body, and vuhat shall betyde his soule, hove his body must be cast seauen foot into the earth, to be eaten of vuormes; and vuhat vuill become of his soule, vuhere it is to remaine, he is altogether uncertaine: vuhich cogitation doth surely much trouble the minde of him that dieth, wuhen he certainly knoweth there is heauen or hell to be expected, and he at equal distance fro them both, neither can he tell which of tacset two contraries vuill fall to his share.

Then all the sinnes of a mans former life come rushinge into his memory, representinge themselves vnto him, as it were in battaile aray, to destroy him, but especially his greinious sinnes wherin he tooke greatest delight, are continually present to his funcie, which doe so torment him that they drive him into a dangerous despaire of his faluation: and the remembrance of those pleasures, which before were gratefull, are now most bitter vnto him. That the wife man faieth true: Ne intuaris vinum quando flauescit cum splenduerit in vitro color eius ingreditur blande, & in nouisimo mordebit vt coluber, & sicut regulus venena diffundet: Behold not wine when it waxeth yelowe, when the colour therof

of Meditation. therof shall shine in the glasse: it goeth in pleasantly, but in the end, it will bite like a snake and as a basiliske it spreads abrode his poisons.

Such a poisoned cup the enemie of mankinde presenteth to the louers of the world to drinke. Such is the liquour of the

outward gilded cup of Babilon.

VVicked man seinge himselse enuironed with so many accusers, beginneth then to feare the success of his latter judgement, and to bewaile himselfe with bitter outcrics, ô miserable and vnhappie man that haue liued thus longe in darknes, and vvalked in the footstepps of iniquitie, vvhat shall novve become of me? if S. PAVLE faieth such as a man sovveth, such Gal. G. he shall reap. I that have fovved nothinge else but the vvorkes of the flesh, vvhat should I expect but corruption?

If S. Ionn faieth, that no vncleane thinge shall enter into that heavenly cittie, which is paued with burnished gold, what part shall I have therin, that am defiled with all kinde of luxurie.

Then followve the Sacraments of the Church, Confessió, Communion, extream Vnction, which are the last helps of our holy Mother the Catholique Church, to fuccour his dyinge foule.

From

Simon

Bl. Alcantara,

From all these foresaid circumstances, thou maiest gather with what anxietie, a wicked man is oppressed at the hower of his departure. Then he will wish that he had led a better life, and what great aufteritie he would vse, if longer time might be permitted to him. Then would he vehemently implore the divine affiftance, but the greatnes of his infirmity, and the panges of death approachinge will not suffer him, which will be so great that he shall scarce be able to tourne his thoughtes vpon God.

Behold after the fe, the Symtomes of this last infirmitie forruners of death, and harbengers of thy last end, which certainly in themselues are horrible, and to the beholders terrible. The stomacke swelleth, the speech faileth, the seet beginne to die, the knees wax cold, the nostrells fall, the cies finck, the face waxeth pale, the tongue can no longer performe its office, finally the striuinge of the soule goinge out of the body, disturbeth all the senses, and leaueth them wholly without vigour.

But who is able to expresse the anguish of the soule, which is farr greater for then it is in a mighty agonie, both in regarde of the doubtfull event ofher saluation: and of the strict accoumpt she is presently to

make

of Meditation. make of the deeds of her wholl life: as also because she naturally loueth the body, she can not be separated from it but with great affliction, especially knowinge not what shall become of her.

Hauinge well contemplated the foule departinge the bodie, thou must yet make two iournies more: one in accompaninge the body to the grave, the other in followinge the foule to the decidinge of her caule. And thou shalt see the euent of both. Marke therfore, the dead carcas how they prepare a windinge sheete for it. What expedition they vie to carry it out of the house. Consider the solemnity and rites wher with it is carried to the graue. Howe the bells ringe, and euery one inquire of the dead. The office of the church also, the prayers of the standers by, the dolefull tune of the church, while the body is carried to the grave and buried. The teares of freinds and kindred, and all those ceremonies which are wont to be performed about the dead.

Leauinge the bodie under the earth, accompany the foule passinge to a newe and vnknowne region, where she expeeth the sentence of the eternal judge. Immagine with thy felfe that thou art prefent at this tribunall, and the wholl court

Bl. Alcantara, of heaven, waitinge with deepe silence, and great attention the euent and sentence of this judgement, here must be given a strict accompt of all receivinges and disbursmentes. I say accompt, of thy life, of thy goods, of thy familie, of the divine inspirations, of the meanes and occasions to liue well, and finally of the blood of iesus CHRIST, and the vse of his Sacraments, and accordinge as his accompt is, so the sentence shall be pronounced.

A Medication for Thursday.

His day thou shalt meditate vpo the latter judgemet, to the end that thou maiest stirr vp in thy soule, two principall effects, which euery Christia soule ought to haue, to witt, the feare of God and hatred of sinne.

Place therfore first before thine eies, howe terrible that day will be, wherin all the litigious causes of the sonnes of Adam shalbe decided, and a finall end put to the processes of our wholl life, and what shall be ordained of those for all eternitie, shalbe publickly pronounced to the veiwe of the wholl world.

This day comprehendeth in it, all the dayes of all ages, past, present; and to come. And exacteth a seuere accompt of all the actions

of Meditation. actions of all men, powringe out all the fury vpon men, heaped vp together from for repassed ages; because then the torrent of God Almighties vengeance, shall ouerflowe beyonde its limits, rushinge with a greater violence, by howe much more it

was the longer deteined, and at once shall ouerwhelme all Iniquity from the crea-

tion of the world.

Consider secondly the dreadfull signes which shall goe before this day. For our Sauiour faith: Erunt signa in sole & luns & Luc, 21. ftellis. And all creatures of heaven and earth shall tremble, vnderstädinge their ruine to be at hande. Men also, as our Saujour faith, worne and withered a way perceiuinge the horrible raginge of the sea: and they themselues scarce a heares breadth distant from death. Seeinge also the mightie rifinges, and inundations of the water; and by these coniecturinge the calamities and miferie, these prodigious signes threate to the world:wilbe amazed with fuch a horrour, that they will be without life, without voyce, without colour, or human shape: they will be dead before they die, dreadinge their damnation before the sentence be pronounced, immagininge the future paine, by their present distemper. Then eueric one out of exceedinge feare.

Market Miller

o Bl. Alcantara,

feare, will be so solicitous of himselfe, that he will nothinge regard others who soeuer they be, parents, or husbands, or wifs, or

freinds or companions.

Imagine thirdly, the vniuerfall deluge of fire, which shall goe before this iudgement: that dreadfull noise of the tumpett, which one of the Archangels shall blowe; wherwith all the people of the wholl world shalbe sommoned together, in one place makinge their appearance before the iudgment seat: and last of all that dreadfull Maiestie; the supreame iudge of the quick and dead, shall assume to him selfe vpon this tribunall.

Fourthly consider what exact accompt shall be required of every one; Holy Ion saith: Vere scio quod ita est quod non instissectur bomo compositus Deo. Si voluerit contendere cum eo, non poterit respondere vnum pro mille. Indeed I knowe it is so, and that man cannot be instissed compared with God if he will contend with him he cannot answere him one for at housand. What then shall become of man when God shall beginne to handle him accordinge to rigour of his institute? when he shall speake to his conscience inwardly?

O wicked and peruerse man, what hast thou seene in me, that out of the height of

of Meditation. impiety, despisingeme, thou shouldest ioyne with my enemies ? I have created thee accordinge to mine owne Image and likenes; I have illuminated thee with the light of faith: I have seasoned thee in the Christian faith from thy infancy: I have redeemed thee with my owne blood; for thy fake I haue fasted, watched, prayed, undergone tedious iournies, sweat blood, and endured manie more miseries in the course of my life; for the love of thee, I haue suffered persecutions, injuries, blasphemies, and the verie Croffe it selfe. This Crosse is my witnes, these nailes are my witnesses, these woundes are my witnesses, which thou feest imprinted in my handes and feete; to conclude heaven and earth that did behold my passion are my witnes. fes. Howe I have drawne thy foule. How I have redeemed thee with the ransome of my pretious blood.

Howe hast thou esteemed this pretious margarite, bought by me with an inestimable price. O generation of vipers, why hast thou chosen to serue my enemy with a great deale of paine, and neglected thy duetie towards me thy creatour and redeemer which thou mightst haue performed with a great deale of pleasure. I haue called thee and thou wouldest not answere

trance. I have stretched my armes vpon the Crosse, and thou hast not regarded me, thou despiseds my councells, promises and theatninges. Pronounce therfore ô yee Angels, the sentence and be judges betwixt me and my vine. Numquid amplius aliquid facere potui vinea mea quod non feci? What could I doe any thinge more to my vine

Bl. Alcantara.

to my vocatio: I have knocked at the dore

of thy heart; and thou hast refused me en-

that I have not done?

What will the reprobate and scoffers at divine misteries answere? they that have hished at vertue, derided simplicitie, and oblerued better the lawes of the world then of God? they that have stopped their eares at the voyce of God? they who have contemned his divine inspirations? they who have bene rebellious against his comandements, and ingreatefull for his benefitts? What will those libertins say, who lettinge themselves loose to all vices, haue liued as if there were no God at all, or that he did not regarde the thinges that are done belowe? What will those fay, who haue followed their comodities, gust and pleasure for a lawe. Quid facietis in die visitationis & calamitatis de longe venientis? ad cuius confugietis auxilium?& vbi derelinquetis gloriam Witram vt non incuruimine sub vinculo & cum interof Meditation.

interfettis cadatis. VV hat will yee doe in the day of vilitation and of calamity cominge from farr? to whose help will ye flee, and where will yea leaue your glory, that ye be not bowed vnder the bond, and fall with the slaine.

Fiftly consider, that terrible sentence, which after judgement, the fupreme judge pronounceth against the wicked, which he will thunder out with such a dreadfull noyle, that at the found therof, the eares of the standers by will ringe, as the Prophet Esay faith: Labia eius repleta sunt indigna- Esa30. tione. & lingua eius quasi ignis deuorans. His lipps are filled with indignation, and his tongue as a deuouringe fire. For what Hames can be so ardent as those wordes: Difcedite à me maledicti in ignem aternum, qui paratwest Diabolo & Angelis eius. Goe from meo yea cursed into euerlastinge fire, prepared for the Diuill and his Angels. Euery word of which sentence is full of bitter torment. For who is able to comprehend what this separation is, what curse, what fire, what lociety, and finally what eternity to which the wicked are adjudged by force of this fentence?

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A Meditation for Fryday.

His day thou shalt meditate vpothe torments of hell, that duely ponderinge them, thou maiest haue a more awe of God Almightie, and a greater hatred of D.Bonau. finne. S. Bonaventvre teacheth that thefe torments are to be confidered accordinge to certaine similitudes sett downe by holy men, concerninge this matter. Wherfore it will not be beside our purpose (as the same Doctour in the same place faith) to imagine hell, a horrible confused Chaos, a lake under the earth, a deepe fyery dungeon, or as a spacious citty, darke and terrible, burninge with obscure and fearfull fire; filled with waylinges, howlinges, weepinge for the inexplicable pai-

In this miserable and vnhappie place are two kindes of torments, pana sensiu, & pana damni, the punishment of sence, and the punishmet of losse of God Almightic.

Consider that there is no outward, or inward sence of the damned, which is not afflicted with a proper torment; for as the damned in all their members and sences haue offended God, viinge them as instruments and weapons wherby, neglectinge

of Meditation. chinge the Society and lawe of God, they served sinne. So the divine iustice hath ordained, that euery sence accordinge to their desert, should be tormented with a proper punishment, the wanton and lasciuious eics, shalbe tortured, with the hydious aspect of divils. The eares which were open to lyes, detractions, and other impurities; shall ringe with vnwonted clamours, out-cries and blasphemics. The noses which were delighted with sweet odours, shalbe poyfned with an intollerable stinck. The tast which was glutted with dainty fare, shalbe tormented with intollerable hunger and thirst. The tongue which vttered detractions and murmuringes, shall drinke the gall of dragons. The wanton which gaue consent to their brutish defires shalbe frozen with extreame cold and as holy lob saith: Ab aquis nivium trans. 10624. ibit ad colorem nimium: From the waters of snowe they shall passe to the extremity of

The interiour sences also shall not want their torments, the imagination shalbe tormented with the apprehension of present paines, the memory with the callinge to minde of fore-passed pleasures, the vnderstandinge with the searc of

futu-

En illa Enangil. Voi erit fletus O' ftridor dentism. future greifs, the will with an incredible hatred and raginge towards God.

There as S. GREGORIE faith shalbe, intollerable cold vnquenchable fire, a neuer dyinge worme, a ftinch which none is able to endure, horred darknes, greuious whippinges, vizards of diuils, confusion of finners, and desperation of al good. Tell me I pray thee couldest thou endure on little moment the least part of al these tormentes? furely it would be very greuious, if not intollerable for thee. What the will it be to fuffer this wholl inundation of euils, at one time in all thy members and fences, externall, and internall, not one or a thousand nights, but for all eternitie? WVhat sence, what tongue, what minde of man is able to conceine or expresse these thinges?

Neither are these the greatest corments the damned suffer. There remaineth yet a more greuious, which the divines doe call the punishment of losse, which consisteth in the perpetuall privation of the beatisicall vision of God and his Saintes, and of all that glorious and blessed Societie. For that is the greatest torment, that deprive therefore that God is that effectuall and cheesest good of all goods, to be deprived

of Meditation.

of him, must needs be the greatest of all cuils.

These are the generall torments of the damned; besides these, there are other particular torments, wherwith every one according to their sinnes are afflicted. The proud, the envious, the couctous, the luxurious, and other vitious have their peculiar torments; the measure of paine there, shalbe proportionable to their pleasure here, consusion there proportionable to their glory and presumption here: powertie and want, to plenty, hunger and thirst, to gluttonie and to former delightes.

To all these aforesaid torments, eternitie is yet to be added, which is as it were the seale and key of all the rest; for if at legth, they should have an end, they were some way tollerable. That which is restrained to a certaine time can not be so vnsufferable, but this punishment is everlastinge, without solace, without relaxation, without diminution; where remaineth no hope of an end of their torments, or tormentours, or themselves that suffer them, but is, as it were a perpetuall and irrevocable banishmet, never to be recalled, which is a thinge of importance to be noted. That

the minde may be stirred up therby, to that fauinge seare and loue of God.

3 From

From this eternitic of torments proceedeth that great hatred wherwith they are incesed against God. Hence proceed those horrible blasphemies and curses which with their impure mouthes they raile at God, fayinge. Curfed be God which hath created vs, and hath condemned vs to an euerlasting death, which doth so oppresse and torments vs that notwithstandinge neuer killeth. Curled be his power, which doth so greuiously afflict vs. Cursed be his wiledome that hath laied open all our wickednes. Curled be his justice that hath exacted eternall punishment for temporall sins. Cursed be his Crosse which hath not benefited vs. Cursed be his blood that was shed, leeinge it requireth reuenge against vs. Cursed be the Mother of God, who although she be pious and propitious to all, yet notwithstandinge hath shewed herselfe to vs cruell and vnmercifull. Cursed be all the Saintes of God raigninge with Christ, and reioyceinge at our mileries.

These are the hymnes, this is that harsh melody, which the damned doe continually iarr, railinge at the almighty with deterted blasphemies for all eternitie.

A Meditation for Saterday.

This day thou shalt meditate vpon the glory of the Saintes of God, which may more eagerly inflame thy foule, to contemne the vanities of this world, and aspire to that eternal selection.

To the end thou mayest get a better knowledge and gust of this inestimable glory. Consider these fine thinges. First the excellency of the place. Secondly the ioy of that society. Thirdly the vision of God. Forthly the glory of their bodies. Fifthly the compleat persection of all aboundant good.

In the excellency of the place, take notice of the admirable and wonderfull spaciousnes of it; in approved authours thou readest, that the least of the fixed starrs of heaven, is bigger then the wholl earth, and some of them doe exceede the earth two or three hundred times in bignes. Then cast up thine cies to heaven and consider the innumerable multitude of them in the firmament, and thou shalt see a great deale of void space, where many more may be placed, howe cast thou then but be associated at the greatness of so rare a fabricke?

A Me-

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Then

Rl. Alcantara,

Then consider the beutie of that place, which no tongue is able to expresse, for if God Almighty in this place of banishment and vale of milerie, hath made many thinges of admirable and comely hue: of what great beuty, and how much odorned dost thou thinke that place to be: which God would have to be the ordinarie leat of his glory: the Pallace of his Maiestie: the mansion of the elect, and the

Paradife of all pleafure?

After the beuty of the place, consider the Nobilitie of the Inhabitants, whose number, fanctity, riches, and glory, are farr beyound our imaginatio. S. Ionn lath the multitude are so great that they are innumerable. S. DIONYSIVS affirmeth that the multitude of Angels doe farr exceed the nuber of sublunary creatures. Whom S. Thomas followinge thinketh, that as the heavens by many degrees exceed the bignes of the earth, beinge but as it were a point of them: fo proportionably the glorious Spirits, therin conteined, doe surpasse all earthly thinges. VV hat can be thought more admirable? affuredly this well pondered would make a man loofe limselfe in the abysse of God Almighties goodnes.

Yea without comparison enery one of these blessed Spirits is far more beutifull to

of Meditation. the eie then all this visible world. O what would it be to contemplate the incomprehensible number of so rare and glorious Spirits? and to vinderstand their seuerall offices and perfections? how the Angels bringe metlages? how the Archangels Minister ? how the Principalities triumph? how the Powers reioyce? how the Dominations bare sway? how the Vertues shine? how the Thrones doe glitter ? how the Cherubins doe illuminate? how the Seraphins doe burne with loue? and finally how all with one vnanimous consent doe

prayle Almighty God.

If the conversation and fellowship of good men be so delightfull, what pleasure will it be, to be afforiated to so great a multitude of Saintes? to be conversant with the Apostles? to talke with the Prophets ? to discourse with Martyrs? and to enion the bleffed familiarity of all the elect? O but what will it be to enjoy his presence whome the morninge starrs doe magnifie? whose beutie the fun and moone admire ? before whome the holy Angels and all the celestiall Spirits doe prostrate themselues. That sumum bonum , that infinite good, which in it selfe comprehendeth all good what soeuer, ô what content will the heart of man feale to behold

him.

Bl. Alcantata.

him, who is one and all. Who although he be most simple without composition, yet containeth in himselfe the persections of all thinges created. VV hat can the heart of

man desire greater?

If it were so much to see and heare Kinge SALOMON, that the Queene of SABA cominge from farr remote parts , moued with his great wisedome, should say: 3.Reg. 10. Beati viri tui & beati ferni tui, hi qui ftant coram te semper & audiunt sapientiam tuam: Happy are thy men and happie are thy feruants, those who stande before thee alwayes and heare thy wisedome. VVhat would it be to behold that true SALO-MON? that eternall wisedome? that immense maiestie? that inestimable beutie? that infinite goodnes? and which is more to enioy him for all erernitie?

This is the effentiall and truest glory of the Saints: this is the last end and centre of all our wishes. Confider more-ouer the glory of their bodies, which shalbe beutified with these fowre giftes, subtilitie, agilitie, impassibilitie and claritie. WWhich will be fo great, that every one of the elect (as our bleffed Sauiour faith) shall glitter like the fun in the kingdome of his tather.

of Meditation. If one only fun doth so reioyce and illuminate this vniuerse. VV hat doest thou thinke, so many brighter sunnes will doe

which shall there shine?

VVhat should I speake of other loyes which there shalbe? health without infirmitie: libertie without violence: beutic without deformity: immortalitie without corruption: aboundance without want : rest without trouble : securitie without feare: riches without pouerty: ioy without forrowe: honour without contradiction. There as S. AvgvsTI-NE faith, shalbe true glory when every one 1. 22. de shalbe comended without errour or flat- cinit. Del tery. True honour shal be denied to none cap. 30. that is wortly of it, and it shalbe given to none vnworthy, neither shall any vnworthy attempt it, there, where none shalbe permitted but the worthy. There shalbe true peace, where they shall suffer no contradiction fro themselues or others: the reward of vertue shalbe he which gaue vertue. And he hath promised to give himselse. Then which, better or greater nothinge can be. For what other thinge is it that he spake by the Prophet : Ero illorum Leui. 26. Deus, & ipst erunt mihi plebs : I will be their God, and they shalbe my people. If I doe not who is it that can satiate their soules? I wile

If

Fwilbe that good which can possibly be desired of man. Their life, their peace, their honour. For so is that vnderstood which the Apostle speaketh: Vs six Deus in omnibus. That God be in all. He shalbe the end of all our desires, which shalbe contemplated without end, shalbe loued without tediousnes, shalbe praysed without ceasinge.

The place of the faints, if thou doest behold the spaciousnes of it, it shalbe most ample, if the beutie, most delicious, if the splendour, most exceeding bright. There shalbe admirable delightfull lociety, no vicissitude of times, the day shall not succeed the night, nor the night the day, but all time shalbe there a like. There shalbe one perpetuall springe, which the holy Ghost, with a wonderfull temper shall alwayes make greene and florishing, there shall all celebrate euerlastinge holy-dayes, rejoyeing with vnspeakable gladnes, there shall all found their instruments of musick and singe prayles to him, by whose power they liue and raigne for all eternity.

O celestial citty, secure habitation, pallace flowinge with all delightes, people without murmuring, quiet Citizans, men without pouertie. O that I may at length enion thee. O that the dayes of my banish-

of Meditation.

Ment were ended. VVhen will that ioyfull day come? VVhen shall I goe out of this mortality? VVhen shall I come and appeare before thy face ô God.

A Meditation for Sunday.

This day thou shalt spend, in recogitating God Almightie his benefitts, that thou mayest bee gratefull to him for the same, and thy heart inflamed with the loue of him, that hath heaped so manie fauours upon thee. VVhich seeing they bee innumerable, thou shalt take sower of the cheisest to thy consideration, which are the benefitts of thy Creation, Preservation, Redemption, and Vocation, besides particular benefitts specially bestowed upon thee.

Touching the benefitt of thy creation, examine diligently what thou were before, what God hath given thee when thou hadest no precedent meritts. Behold thy comely bodie well composed of its members and senses: Looke vpon thy noble soule, beutified with these excellent faculties, the vnderstanding, will, and memoric.

Remember that when he gaue thee thy foule, he gaue thee all thinges, seing there is

46 Bl. Alcantara, no perfection in any creature, which is not found more excellent in the foule of man. Hence it manifestly followeth, that when God bestowed this great benefit vpon thee, he with it bestowed what els socuer

thou haft.

Concerninge the benefitt of thy conferuation and preferuation, confider that all thy being dependeth upon the divine prouidence and disposure, without which thou canst not move a foote, or subsist the least moment of time. More-ouer for thy yse he hath created the wholl vniuersall world, and all thinges therin conteined; the earth, the sea, birds, fishes, beasts, plants, nay the verie Angels themselues he hath ordained to doe thee service. Consider thy health, the strength of limes, and thy verie life it selfe, which thou enjoyest, to be the great benefitts of God Almightie, who, by dayly nourishment and other temporall helps, colerueth all these in their proper vigour. Observe the miseries and tribulatios vnto which other mortall men are subject; into which, as others thou hadst easily falls, had not the divine goodnes protected the

In the benefitt of thy Redemptio: consider the aboundant good both in quantitie and qualitie, which he hath purchased to thee by it,

of Meditation.

Then call to minde the bitternes of his roments, which he suffered in soule and bodie to eale thee; and that the acknowledgmet of thele fauours may take a greater impression in thee, in the mysterie of his passion take notice of these fower thinges. First, who it is that suffereth, secondlywhat he suffered, thirdly for whome he fuffered, tourthly why he fuffered.

He that fuffered, was God, what he fuffered, weare the most greuious torments, and fuch that neuer any mortall man did

endure the like.

For whome? for most ingratefull creatures, curled and worthy of hell fyre.

VVhy? not for any comoditie or profitt of his owne, or that we had merited to much by our precedent meritts. But only moued to it by his infinite loue and bounty tovvards vs.

Cocerninge the benefit of thy vocation, colider the grace he gaue thee, whe he infuled into thee, the Christian faith, by the reciuing of Baptisme and other Sacraments: when he did enrolle thee in the booke of his eternitie, amongest faithfull soules. It after thy first vocatio, when by sinne thou hadest lost the innocencie of baptilme, he hath drawne thee againe out of the mire of thy ovene corruptio, restored thee to grace

Then

and brought thee back againe into the way of thy owne falutation: What than kes givinge oughtest thou to render vato him, for so great a benefit? How great was his mercie to thee, that with longanimitie he expected so manie yeares? that he permitted thee to spend thy dayes in so great impuritie of wickednes? that he hath often visited thee with good and holy inspirations? that he did not cutt of the thred of thy perverselife, as he served others in the same place? To conclude, that he called thee with such efficacious grace, that he restored thee from death to life, and opened

thine eies to contemplate his cleare light?

How great was his clemecie towards thee,

that he supported thee with his grace, not

to returne back agains to thy former sings,

But to ouercome the enimies of mankind,

and constantly to perseuere in a vertuous

Bl. Alcantara,

These are the comon benefits. Besides these, there are manie secret ons known to none but those that receive them, and others, which indeed are not clearly known vnto themselves, but only to him that bestowed them. How often for thy prid, arrogancie, ingratitude and slouth hast thou deserved to be left of God as

many for leffer causes have beene? Yet not

with-

of Meditation. withstandinge he would not? How often hath God with his fingulare prouidence, exempted thee from euill, remoued occasions of offending, broke the snare that the enimie had laied for thy perdition; hath frustrated his expectation, and would not permit that his councells and machinationsshould prevaile against thee? hove often hath he done to vs as he did to S. PETER in the Gospell: Ecce Satanas expetinit vos, ve Luc. 22. cribaret sicut triticum. Ego autem rogaui pro te, venon deficiat fides tua: Behold Sattan hath required to have you for to lift as wheat but I have praied for thee that thy faith faile not. And vyho can knovy thele lecret benefits but God alone? benefits, which be palpable are easie to be seene, but those vivich be private confistinge in the vvorkinge of good or preuentinge of ill the mind of man can not perfectly comprehend. Wherfore it is meet and convenient to reason, that wee should render immortall thankes to God, for all these benefits and cofelle ingenuoully, that vve haue receiued more, the vve are able to restore, and that our obligations tovvards him, are so great, that with any goods of ours we shall neuer liue to requite them, vyhen vve cannot so much as number or comprehend them in our vnderstandinge. CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the time, and fruite of these Meditations.

E HOVLD (Christian Reader)thou hast seauen former meditations, accomodated to euery day of the weeke, not so, that it is an offence to meditate vpon an other matter; when as whe saied before, whatsoeuer inflameth the heart, to the love and feare of God, and to the keepinge of his comandements, may profitably bee assumed for matter of meditation. VVe therfore out of so great a number haue selected these, both, for that they conteine the cheifest misteries of our faith, and that in them is force and efficacie, to rouse vp our souls to the love and feare of God: as also to set before nouices, which haue need of a guide, prepared and as it were fore-chewed matter, least they confusedly wander up and downe in this spacious feild, without any certaintie, now meditatig vpon one thinge and presently vpon an other.

More-ouer these meditatios, as wee houe

faied elswhere, sute best with those which The fordoe begine to turne to God Almightie mer mefrom their wicked courses. For these had ditations
need, to be helped by the consideration of me shey
these thinges, to the detestation and horproperly
rour of sinne, the feare of God, the contempt of the world, which are as it were
the first steps to the amendment of our
former peruerse life, therfore it is good
that they should sometime insist in them,
that they may have the better foundation
for other ensuing vertues.



D2 CHAP.



OF SEAVEN OTHER

MEDITATIONS

O F

PASSION THE

OVR LORD,

And the manner hove it ought to be meditated vpon,

IV. CHAP.

ERE followe seauen other Meditations of the Passion of CHRIST, his Refurrection and Ascension into heaven, to which others of his holy life may well be added.

But we must note, that in the Passion of ges cheif. our bleffed Sauiour, fix thinges cheefly are to be meditated vpon. First, the bitternes

of Meditation. of his forrowe, that we may compassionate considered with him. Secondly, the greatnes of our in the paffinnes, which were the cause of histor- fion of ments, that we may abhorr them. Thirdly, the greatnes of the benefit, that we may be gratefull for it. Fourthly, the excellencie of the divine charitie and bountie therin manifested, that we may loue him more feruently. Fifthly, the conveniencie of the misterie, that we may be drawne to admiration of it. L'astly, the multiplicitie of vertues of our blessed Sauiour which did shine in this stupendious misterie, that we may partly immitate and partly admire them; wherfore in the middest of these meditations let vs some time compassionate with our bleffed Sauiour in the extremitie of his forrowes, extreame indeed, both by reason of the tendernes of his bodie, as also for the great affection he bore vnto our soules. He did suffer them without any manner of consolation, as we shall speake herafter in its proper place. Sometimes let vs stirr vp in our selues compunction for our sinnes, which were the cause of these his so great sufferinges. Sometimes let vs kindle in our souls an ardent affection, considering his great affection towards vs; which vpon the Crosse he declared and • D 3

Six thin-

Bl. Alcantara, manifested to the whole world. And the benefit which he bestowed upon vs in his passion, because he bought vs with the inestimable price of his precious bloud, of which only we reape the fruite and commoditie. Sometimes let vs ruminate vpon the conveniencie of the manner, his eternall wisdome would he pleased to chuse, to cure our miseries, to satisfie for our sins, to relecue our necessities, to make vs partakers of his glorie, to represse our prid, to induce vs to the love and joyfull sufferinge of pouertie, iniuries, austeritie, and all comendable laborious exercices. More-ouer it will not be beside the matter, to looke into the admirable examples which did principally shine in the life and passion of our sweet Sauiour, his meeknes, patience, obedience, mercie, pouertie, charitie, humilitie, bountie, modestie, and other his rare vertues, which in all his actions did glitter like starrs in the firmament. And cheifly to this end, let vs meditate vpo thele thinges, that as neere as we can, we may imitate them. Let vs shake offlouth, and eleuate our fouls, that as much as in our power lyeth with the help of his holy grace we may trace his facred foot-steps. This is the best and most profitable methode of meditatinge vpon our Blessed Saujours

of Meditation. passion, that is to say, that ther-by we be drawne to imitation, and so to be wholly transformed into our Blessed Saujour, that each one may fay with the Apostle: Vino autem iam non ego, viuit vero in me Christus: And nowe I liue but not I, but CHRIST in me. More-ouer in meditating our Blessed Sauiours passion, we must set him before the cies of our fouls, imageninge that we fee, as present the panges of his heavy sufferinges; and we must not only insist upon the bare historic of his passion, but we must consider other circumstances, namely these tower, first, who it is that suffereth, secondly, for whome, thirdly, howe, fourthly, why. First, he that suffereth is God, omnipotent, infinite, immense. For whome? the most vngratefull creature in the world, and less regardinge his benefits. Howe? with most profound humilitie, charitie, bountie, meeknes, mercie, patience, modestie, &c. VVhy? not for his owne commoditie, nor our merits; but for his immense pietie, mercie, goodnes and lone towards vs.

Last of all, let vs not onely contemplate his outward, but his inward torments, for much more may be considered in the soule then in the bodie of Christ, both for the more sensible feelings of his passion there,

56 Bl. Alcantara, as also for divers other confiderations therin.

Thus having set downe this short preface let vs proceed to the handlinge of the misteries themselves of our blessed Sauiours passion.

Seauen other Meditations.

A Meditation for Munday.

His day after thou hast seigned thy selfe with the signe of the Crosse, thou shalt meditate upon the washinge of the disciples secte, and institution of the blessed Sacrament.

Consider, ô my soule, at this supper sweet Iesus himselfe to be present, contemplate that inestimable example of humilitie, which he there proposed unto thee for imitation; when risinge from the table, where he sat with his disciples, hee would be pleased to wash their feete: O sweete Iesus, what is it that thou doest? O sweet Iesus, why doth thy mightie Maiestie thus diminish it selfe? O my soule, what wouldest thou have thought to see God tumblinge at the feete of men, and prostrate before Iudas? O barbarous and cruel man, could not so great humilitie molific

of Meditation. thy heart > was not fo great bountie and sweetnes able to penetrate thy entrals, and to reclaime thee from thy intended mischeise? can it be that thou determinest to sell this meeke lambe for so small aprice? nay if it be so, how couldest thou yet endure to behold so rare an example ? I wonder it did not wound thy guiltie soule with compunction for thy greuious crime? O delicate hands, howe could you touch so filthie, fordide, and with finne contaminated feete? O pure and vnspotted hands, howe could you endure to wash those feete, that were fouled with goinge and cominge to make a sale of your precious bloud? O thrice happie Apostles, did you not tremble and stand amazed at the fight of so great humilitie? What dost thou doe PETER ? canst thou permitt the Lord of Maiestie to wash thy feete? S. PETER wholly aftonished with the admiration of this spectacle, when he sawe our blessed Sauiour fallinge downe at his feete, cryed out : Domine tu mihi lauas pedes ? Lord doest thou wash my feete ? what, art not thou the Sonne of the euer-liuinge God? art not thou the creatour of the whole world, the beutie of heauen, the Paradise of Angels, redeemer of mankind, splendour of thy Fathers glorie, most deepe fountaine of the eternall wisdome? and doest thou wash my feet? howe cometh it to passe, that thou Lord of so great maiestic and glorie shouldest thus debase thy selfe to so vile a service?

The cosider, howe he washed all his disciples feet one by one, and after washinge, wiped them with a linnen cloath wherwith he was girded, open the eies of thy mind to behold in these misteries a representation of our redemption. This linnen cloath so wiped their feet, that all the dirt which was upon their feet did sticke on the linnen cloath: not without misterie.

For what more foule then mã conceiued in sinne? What more pure thể Christ conceiued by the operation of the holy Ghost? Dilectus meus candidus & rubicundus electus ex milibus: My beloued saith the spouse in the canticles is white and rudly chosen of thousands. Yet not withstandinge most pure, most beutifull Christ tooke vnto himselfe all the spots of our soules: fro which that he might clése vs (as you may see him vpo the Crosse) he would be pleased to desile himselfe with the silth of our impuritie. Consider lastly with what words our Blessed Sauiour closed vp this

chishumble action: Exemplum dedi vobis vis quemadmodum ego feci vobis, ita & vos faciatic: I haue giuen you an example that as I haue done to you, you may doe the like. Which words doe not only pertaine to this prefent action, and example of humilitie: but likwife to all the actions of Christ through-outhis wholl life, vohich is a most absolute and perfect rule for vs to square our actions by, especially of humilitie, which is here to life represented vnto vs.

Of the inflitution of the blessed Sacrament.

LIE that defireth to comprehend any thinge of this noble misterie, must certainly thinke, that no tounge is able to express that immense loue, and ardent affection vyhervvith our blessed Sauiour vvas inflamed tovvards his holy Church and all faithfull foules, in institutinge this stupendious misterie. For vyhen this bridgrome determined to depart out of this christ inmortall life, and to leave the Church his stituted beloued spouse; least this is departure this sashould be any occasion to her of forget-cramens. tinge her redeemer; he gaue her this Sacra- The first. ment vyherin lie himselse is present, as a pledge and memoriall of his perpenual loue. Then

Cent. 5.

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The second

Then leinge he was to be longe absent; least his spouse should remaine solitarie alone, he, for her consolation, would leave himselfc for her companion in this holy Sacrament.

The third.

When our bleffed Saujour was to suffer death for the redemption of his spoule, to enrich her with his most pretious bloud, and to purge her from sinnes: least she should be defrauded of so great a treasure, he would give her a key in this Sacrament wherby she might at her pleasure enioy these riches: for as S. Chrysostome saith, we must thinke as often as we come to this Sacrament we put our mouth to the bleedingeside of Christ, and from thence drinke his most precious blood whose merits we participate.

The fourth

More-ouer this celestiall bridgrome, did desire to be tenderly beloued of his spouse, and for this cause would leave her this misticall meat, consecrated with most efficatious words, and therin so great vertue, that who focuer receives it worthily shall presently bestrooke with the dartes of loue.

The fifth.

He would likewise bestowe vpon his spouse some sure pledge therby to make her secure of the certaine succession of suture glorie, that in hope of so great a good,

of Meditation. he might temper the laborious difficultie and make the tedious bitternes of this present life, to be more tollerable, wherfore that the spoule might certainly beleeue, that she shall at length attaine to these vnspeakable goods, he hath giuen her for a pawne, this inestimable treasure, vyhich is as much vvorth as that vvhich is expected hereafter, that she should not doubt but that God vvill giue her himselse in glorie where he liueth in spirit, that would be pleased to give her himselfe in this vale of teares, vyhere he liueth in flesh.

He vvould more-ouer vvhen he dyed The fixib. make his last will and testament, wherin he left to his spoule a singular manna to cure all her infirmities, a gift then which, nothinge can be more foueraigne, nothinge more pretious, seeing the deity it selfe is therin conteined.

Lastly, he desired to feede our soules The sewith some heavenly foode, seinge they nearly. need no lesse nourishment that they might liue spiritually, then the body needeth corporall sustinence that she might live corporally. Wherfore this spirituall physition whe he had diligently examined and

felt

felt the pulse of our fragilitie. instituted this holy Sacrament which he exhibited vnto vs vnder the species or forme of bread, that he might declare what effect it should worke in vs, that is to say, that it is as necessarie for our soules, as bread for the bodie.

A Meditation for Tweefday.

This day thou shalt meditate of the prayer Christ made in the garden, the methode therof, and the contumelies he suffered in the howse of Annas.

Consider therfore, howe Christ our Lord, after the consummation of his mysticall body with his disciples, before he entred into the tragedie of his passion, went to make his prayer vpon the mount Oliuet, wherby he would instruct vs, that in all aduersities and tribulations of this present life, we sly to prayer, as to a holy anchore; the power of which is so great, that it either beateth back the forces of tribulations, or (which is of greater excellencie) ministreth sufficient strength to endure them, with a constant and willinge mind.

He tooke for companions in his journy of his disciples, whome he loued about

aboue the rest, S. Peter, S. Iames, and S. Iohn. Which as they were cie-wittenesses of his transsiguration, so likwise they should be present in his agonie, to behold him for the love of man now transformed into a farr more different shape; then he was, when he manifested himselfe vnto them, in a glorious and glitteringe forme.

That also he might open vnto them, his inward greife, to be much greater then appeared outwardly. He faith vnto them: Tristis est anima meav (que ad mortem. Sustinete hic & vigilate mecum: My soule is heavy vnto death. Stay heere and weatch with me. O vvordes full of compassion! Then departinge from his disciples a stones cast, vvith great submission and reuerence he praied his Father:Pater si fieri potest transeat à me Calix iste, verumtamen non mes voluntas sed tua fiat : Father if it be possible let this Chalice passe from me, but not my vvill, but thine be done. Which prayer when he had repeated thrice, he fell into such an agonie, that he severat drops of blood, trickling downe the earth, from his precious body.

Consider that, partly the foreseeinge of the most vnspeakable torments that ever any mortall man suffered, prepared for his

nof

most tender body: partly the distinct representation of the sins of the whole world, for the expiatinge of which he was nowe to suffer death vpon the Crosse: partly the

remembrance of the ingratitude of many, which would not esteeme, or reape any prosit from this great benefitt, strock such a deepe impression into his soule, that it silled it with sad and incredible anxiety, so troubled his senses and tender slesh, that all the elements of his body beeinge weakened, the opened pores on every side sweet out drops of blood. If the slesh, which properly suffered not this anguish, but only through a simple immagination, was

thus afflicted, what did his soule seale; to whome properly these sorrowes did appertaine?

His prayer beinge ended, that counterfait freind of Christ Iudas the traitour, came atteded with a hellish boand; he I fay which renounced his apostleship, to be head and Captaine of a troope of hellhounds, behold in the fore-front of that wicked multitude, impudently cominge to

his master whome before he had solde, betraying him with a kisse of peace and freindship.

In that hower faied I Esvs to the company, which came to apprehend him:

af Meditation.

Fou have come out as to a theofe to apprehend
me with sverdes and stanes? I satt every day
with you teachinge in the temple, and you laid
not bould on me. But this is your howver and the
power of darkenes.

This misteric is worthy of admiration, for what thinge can be more admirable and stupendious, then to see the only begotten Sonne of God, not only in the forme of finfull man, but in the shape of a condemned man : Hac est bera vestra, & potestas tenebrarum: This is your hower and the power of darkenes. From which wordes is gathered that this innocet lambe, was left to the diabolical cruelty of the princes of darkenes, who by their vice-gerentes and ministers powred all the malice and milcheife they were able to conceine against him. Consider, how much for thy take the supreme Maiestie of God is humbled, to endure all the extremitie of tormetes that euer any suffered in this present lite, not to die for his owne faults but for thy fins, but he did vndergoe this of his owne accord, to free thee from the power of Sattan.

He had skarce spoken these wordes, when that wholl rabble of hunger-started wolues, gapinge after their prey, rushed vpon this meeke and innocent lambe, ha-

linge,

linge, tearinge and afflictinge him with at much cruelty as euer they could. O barbarous and inhumane proceedinges ? ô cruell and sauage blowes, contumelious violences, wherwith they tormented him? they insulted after a horred manner no otherwise, the conquerers retourne loaden with spoiles after they have put to flight their enemies, or hunters when they have caught their prey. The handes which a little before were exercised in workinge miracles, they were nowe bound with ropes so cruelly, that they rased the skin, and belmeared them with blood. Thus they led him through the publick streetes of Ierusalem, followinge him with contumelies and blowes: behould him in this iournie goinge alone, lest by all his disciples, compassed with amultitude of his enemies, forced to make fuch hast, that he was wholly out of breath, his colour changed, his face blushinge, and his wholl body weakened and wearied by reason of the intollerable present difficultie.

Although our blessed Sauiour was barbarously and most cruelly handled by that blood-suckinge multitude: yet neuer the less thou mightst haue seene in his countenance a pleasant sweetnes, in his eies a comely grauitie, in his manners a di-

of Meditation. 67
uine grace, which all the torments of the
wholl world could not so much as dimi-

nish in the least degree.

After this goe with our blessed Sauiour into the house of Annas the high Preist, that there thou maiest take notice what fauour he reaped for his mild answer, when Annas examined him of his, and his disciples doctrine: which was, that one of the Officers gaue him a cruell blovve vpon his cheeke sayinge: Sic respondes Pontifici? Doest thou answer the high Preist so? to him Christ streplied: Si male locutus sum, testimonium perhibe de malo: toan.18. Is autem hene, quid me cadis? If I have spo-

fi autem bene, quid me cedis? If I have spoken euill bringe testimony of it, but if

vvel, vvhy doest thou beate me?

Behould, ô my soule, not only the mild answer, but the print of the Officers hand in his tender cheeke, his countenance not-with standing equiet and amiable, not a vehitt moued at the shame of so great an effront, because he invvardly thought so lovve and humbly of himselfe, that he had tourned the other side veithout delay, if the rascald had desired it.

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A Meditation for Woodenflay.

His day thou shalt confider, how L CHRIST our Lord was offered vp to CAYPHAS the high Preist: what torments he endured there all that night: bow S. PETER denied him : and last of all how cruelly he was scourged.

Consider first of all, how he was led from the house of Annas to Car-PHAS his house, it is worth thy paines to followe him thether. For there thoushalt fee the mighty sun of instice ecclypsed: there thou shalt behould, the dinine face vpon which the Angels themsehes delight to gaze, to be deformed with the filthic spittinges of the lewes. For out bleffed Saujour standinge in the middest of them, was consured by the high Preist in the name of his Father, to speake out, what he was. He answered as beforming himselse: but they who were unworthy of fuch an answere, blinded with the splendour of this great light, like mad dogges rushed vpon him, vomening vp the bitter gaule of their wholl malice against him.

They began whole troupes of them to him, to beate and kick him, they spit

of Meditation. vpon his dinine face, and threwe the veric fnot of their filthy noses vpon it. Others hood-winked his eies with a dirty linnen cloath, smiteinge him vpo the cheeke, and would in mokerie haue him prophecy who it was that strooke him. O admirable and vn-heard of patience, and humilitie of the only begotten Sonne of God. O the face which the Angels of heauen doe contemplate with incredible ioy, befmeared with their fordid and filthy spittinges.

Men, when they spit, comonly tourne themselues to some foule place, some what remote from the fight of others. In this pallace was there no place found more contemptible therin to cast their spit and filthy dryuell, then the facred face of CHRIST IESVS? Oman that art but dust and ashes, canst thou choose but be flirred vp to humility, and contempt of thy felfe at fo rare an example?

Consider more-ouer, what tormentes our blessed Sauiour suffered all that night, how the Officers that kept him, that fleepe should not close his eies, afflicted him, derided the supreme Maiestie of God, and loaded him with many injurious contumelies.

Waigh E 3

Waighe with thy selfe, my soule, that now thy spoule is made the white and mark, receiuing vpo him selse all the dartes of iniurious contumelies that the mischeiuons Iewes could shute at him. O cruell night, o vnquiet night, in which thou blessed I Esvs couldest rest no more by reason of anguish and affliction, then others who tooke pleasure to torment the. The night was ordained for the rest of all creatures, that the mebers and senses wearied with the labour of the day before, might then take some repose. But the wicked Soldiers that kept thee, spent it in tormentinge of thy senses, they did bind thy bodie, vexedthy foule, fettered thy hands and feete with manicles, buffeted thy cheekes, spit vpon thy face, blinded thine eies, so that all thy senses when they should haue beene refreshed were afflicted.

O! howe farre did these mattins disser from those, which at the same time the blessed Angels did singe in heauen? they cried holy, holy: and the lewes cried he is guiltie of death, crucisie, crucisie him. O angelicall spirits which understood both cries, what could you imagine or thinke whe you sawe the inhumane crueltie wher with he was handled in earth, whome in heauen you adored with so of Meditation. 71
great submission and reuerence? did you
not wonder to see him suffer all these extreame tormentes for to expiate the sins of
those, who insticted them vpon him? who
hath euer heard of such immense charitie,
that for this reason one should suffer death,
to heale the greise and cure the woundes

of his murtherers? The fall of S. P E T E B, that great pillar, did not a little increase the anxietie of this tedious night; that he, whome he enteirely loued amongst the rest whome he chose to be present at his glorious transfiguration, to whome he committed the primacie of his holy Church, whome he ordained to be head and Prince of the Apostles, that he I say, should before his face, and in his presence denie him, not once but thrice, addinge blasphemies and oathes, that he knewe not the man. Tell me P E-TER, did this man seeme to thee so vngodly and wicked, that in future times thou didest feare, it would bee a disgrace vnto thee to confels him now? didest thou not colider that thou didlt first pronounce the sentence of condemnation against him, before he was adjudged by the high Preists, when thou didest not esteeme him so much as worthy of thy acknowledgment? couldest thou doe a grea-

But CHRIST forrowfull for this great fault of S. PETER turned himselfe, and cast his cies vpon him, that with his gratious countenance he might reduce this wandering sheepe into the sheepfold of his mercies. O admirable aspect, secret indeed, but full of signification, which S. PETER knewe right vvell, and vvell vnderstood of what force and essicacy it vvas. The trovvinge of the cock had little auailed to his compunction and conuerfio, had not the countenance of CHRIST our Saujour bene adjoyned. Whose eies did speake and vvorke that stupendious chaunge, the certainty of which, not only the flowing teares of S. PETER, but of our blessed Saujour himselfe did sufficiently testifie.

After all these injuries consider, what CHRIST did suffer, when he was bound to be scourged at the pillar, for the judge when he savve, that be could not pacific the fury of those infernall monsters, he thought good to aduise the, to beate him vvith roddes and vvhippes. Wherby his wholl bodie might be torne, hopinge that vvay to molifie their obstinate and obdurate hearts: that when they favve him fo torne and mangeled, they would ceafe

of Meditation.

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further to desire his cruell death.

Enter novve my foule in spirit, into the house of PILATE, and haue teares in readines, for thou wilt have neede of them, if thou shalt diligently confider,

vyhat wyas done there.

Behould hove inhumanely these abiect and infamous roagues spoyled our blessed Sauiour of his garmetes. Marke the humility of CHRIST, hove he suffered himselfe to be stripped, not so much as opening his mouth, nor vtteringe any vvord against their injurious behaujour. See his facred body bound to the pillar with many ropes, in such a fassion that on eucry fide they might have rome to torture him.

Consider, hove our Lord of Angels stood alone in the middest of his cruell enemies, vvithout any Aduocates or Procuratours that vvould defend his cause, yea altogether without any one man, who at least vvile a farr of, would fo much as copassionate the bitternes of his tormetes, Doest thou not heare the noise of roddes and vvhippes wherwith they loaded, teared and rent the delicate fleshe of I E S V S, addinge stroke vpo aroke, and vvound to vvound? doest thou not see his vvholl body in one short moment of time, with

Bl. Alcantara, the vehemency and often iteratinge the blowes, to be couered as it were with one vlcer, his skin to be dravvne from the flesh, and blood from his wholl body, from the crovvne of his head to the soles of his feete, to flovve dovyne vpon the earth? especially, is it not dreadfull for thee to behould the place betvvixt the shoulders, vvherupon almost the vyholl force of all the blovves did light?

Consider hovy CHRIST the Sauiour of the world, after that extreame crucity of his tormentours, vvent vp and dovvne the Pallace all torne and cutt, seekinge and gathering vp his garmentes, not findinge one amongst those inhumane rascalls, that vvould shevy vnto him the least act of humanity, in vvashinge or refreshing his vvoundes, or lend their hand to help him to putt on his cloaths. All these thinges are vvorthy of our diligent consideration, that therby wee might stirr vp our soules to due compassion of his miseries.



A Meditation for Thursday.

This day thou shalt meditate, how CHRIST vvas crovvned vvith thornes, his presentation before all the people, his condemnation, his bringinge out to the place of execution, and last of

all his caryinge of his Crosse.

The Spoule in the Canticles inuited vs to the consideratio of these tormetes, when she saide: Egredimini filie Sion & videte Regem cant 3. SALOMONEM in Diademate, quo coronauit eum Mater sua in die desponsationis eius, & in die letitie cordis eius: Goe forth yea daughters of Sion and see Kinge SALOMON in the Diademe vyhervvith his Mother hath crovvned him, in the day of his despousinge, and in the day of the ioy of his heart.

What doest thou does what doest thou thinke my soule?my tounge vvhy art thou filet? O sweet Saujour whe I ope mine eies, and behould this forrowfull spectacle, my heart is ret with greife. What, Lord, were not thy former tormetes, imminet death, and aboundace of thy blood already shed, sufficiét for the redéptio of mankinde?but thou must yet be crowned with sharp thornes?

My soule that thou Maiest the better vnderstäd this sadd spectacle, sett beforethine cies our bleffed Sauiour, in his former beuti

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before he suffered these tormentes? Then behould him on the contrary in this mise-rable state. If in the first, thou doest rightly veiwe him, thou shalt see him more beutiful then the sun. In his cies a comely grauity, in his speech a gratious facility: in his actions singular modesty: in the gesture of his wholl body protound humility,

ioyned with reuerent Maichy.

Then after thou hast satisfied thy soule with pleasure, in behoulding this rare peece of admirable perfection, then tourne thine eies againe, and looke voon him, as he is in this present miserable state. Ridiculously cloathed in purple, bearinge in his hand a reede for a Kingely Sceptre, and vpon his head a Crowne of sharpe thornes, in steade of a regall Diademe, his eies were dimmed, his face pall and wan, fouled and couered with the filthy spittles of the Iewes: behould him within, and without: his heart consumed with greise: his body torne with woudes and blowes, forfaken of his disciples, hastened to undergoe death of his enemies, mocked of the Soldiars: despised of the highe Preists: rejected as a wicked Kinge arrogantly alfurning this title: vniustly accused, and destitute of all humane aide.

Doe not consider these thinges as done and past many yeares since, but imagine with thy selfe, that at this present they be in acting e before thy face; nor as an other mans sorrowes, but as thine owne afflictios, sett thy selfe in his place and coniecture what tormetes thou shouldest suffer, if thy head were boared to the skull and thy brain-pan pearced with sharp thornes?

of Meditation.

brain-pan pearced with sharp thornes? But what doe I say thornes, when thou canst skearce endure the prick of a small

needle? howe great then was the paine, his tender head suffered, with this news

and vn-heard-of torment.

The Coronatio of our bleffed Sauiour, with many mockes and kornes being ended the judge produced him before the people, saying: Ecce homo: Behould the ma. If yea thirst after the death of the man, behould him scarce a heares bredth distat from it, yea he is brought to that pass, that he descrueth rather commiscration, then your enuy, if yea feare that he will make himselse a Kinge, behould he is so deformed, that he scarce reteineth the shape of a mã: doc yea feare any violence from these hands that are so straightly manicled? doe yea dreade any harme fro a ma that is cast into such a miserable and dejected state, whose body is so mageled and weakened? Con-

Cosider, o my soule, in what state the Sauiour was, when the very judge himselfe. did thinke with this aspect, would moue his bloody enemies to compassion: from vvhich vve may gather , vvhat a miserable thinge it is, to see a Christian of such an obdurate heart, which can or will not condole the passions of our Saujour. when they were such, that the very iudge did thinke them lufficient, to molific the malice of his enemies. But PILATE leeinge with thees exceedinge tormentes, he could no vvay temper or alvvage their fury, vvent into his Pallace fatt in the judgment feat to pronounce the definitive sentece against CHRIST. Novve the Crois vvas prepared at the dore and the fatall standard vyhich thretned ruine to our blessed Saujour, vvas novve in a readines.

The sentence beinge pronounced with the addition of more tormentes, they loaded his vyearied shoulders with a heavy Crosse, to carry to the place of his execution.

But our meeke Lord, not only not reieæd it, but out of that immense charity tovvards vs, vvhervvith he suffered for our sins, obediently and vvillingly embraced it. of Meditation.

Now the innocent Is AAC with his weake shoulders, supported the intollerable burthen of the Crosse to the place of sacrifice. The simple people and deuout women, followed him weepinge. For who was able to conteine teares, to see the Lord and Kinge of Angels goinge thus on soote, with the extremity of tormentes, his knecs quiueriuge, his body stoopinge, his eies blinded, his face besmeared with blood, his head crowned with thornes, and his eares deasened with the noise of droomes and trumpetts?

Leaue a while,ô my foule, this horred spe Etacle, & with wateringe cies, with fobbes, and figthes goe to the bleffed Virgine, and lay to her. Lady of Angels, Queene of heaué, Gate of Paradile, Aduocate of the world, Sanctuary of finners, Health of the sult, Ioy of the Saintes, Mistrelle of vertue, Mirrour of purity, Symboll of chastity, Patterne of patience, and Rule of all perfection. O me miserable and vntortunate, what haue I seene with the eies of faith? Howe could I live to behould to inhumane vlage, interrupting fighes will not permitt me scarce to speake, howe I left thy only begotté Sone, loadé vvith a mighty Crosse, to which he was presently to be nayled, and carryinge it to the place of execution. What

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What heart, what minde, what soule, is able to comprehend the dolour, the bleffed Virgine MARIB then did suffer? her heart fainted, and a dead sweate with extreame anguish possessed her wholl body, and presently she had given up the ghost, had not the divine dispensation reserved her, till better times, for her greater merite, and more aboundant reward.

The bleffed Virgine, with speed followeth the steps of her beloved Sonne, that ardent defire wherwith she was inflamed to see him, added vigour to her, of which forrowe had bereaued her: she heard a farr of the noise of armes, the concourse of people, and the sound of trumpets, on every side publishing the passion of CHRIST, after that she sawe the glitteringe of launces and holbeards:in the way she found his footsteps sprincked with drops of blood, by which without any guid or leader she might eafily find the way. Approachinge to her Sonne, she litted up her eies swelled with teares, to behould him, whome she esteemed dearer then her owne foule.

O what strife was there in the soule of this blessed Virgine, betwit feare and loue? she did vehemently desire to see her Sonne, but on the other side she durst not

of Meditation. cast her eies vpon him in this lamentable and afflicted state. At length when she drew neerer, these two celestiall lights beheld eatch other, their eies pearced eatch others soule, but greife enforced their tongues to filence, notwithstanding their heartes did mutually discourse, and the Sonne vnto the Mother faid: Sweet Mother, why comest thou hether ony loue, my doue? thy forrowe reneweth my mileries, and my tormetes crucifieth thy foule? retourne, retourne againe into thy house, This defiled company of theeues and murtherers beleemeth not thy virginall purity. These and the like words they inwardly vetered , all the way vntill they came to the place of execution.

A Meditation for Fryday.

His day thou shalt meditate vpon the misteric of the Crosse, and the seauen wordes which Christ Transfer vpon it: Rouze vp my soule and duely ponder this great mistery of the Crosse, which brought fourth the fruite of satisfactio, to expiate that great losse, which all mankind suffered by a tree.

Consider how, before our blessed Sauiour came to the Mount of Caluarie (to make his death more ignominious) his

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cruell tormenters stripped him of all his cloathes, except his coate, which was without same, behould howe patiently this meeke lambe suffereth his garmentes to be taken from him, not so much as openinge his mouth or speakinge one worde against their barbarous dealinge. He permitted these thinges willingly, but with a great straine to modesty. He was stripped naked that we might receive a better garment, to cover the nakedness of our sins, then that of ADA M the sirst parent of all mankind, made of the leaves of sig-trees to cover

the nakednes of his body.

Some Doctours thinke that the crowne of thornes was taken of, to pull with more facilitie his volcamed garment over his eares and after to be failtened on againe, which could not be without a vehement paine, the sharp thornes did a fresh wound his facted head with unspeakable torment. And furely this is not valike, seeing in the wholl time of his passion they spared him in nothinge; but the bitterest tormentes they could deute, they heaped vpon him, especially when the Europelist saith, they did to him whatfocuer they would. This coate did so attaue to the woundes of his facted body, by reason of the congealed blood, that when the barbarous hangemen drewe

drewe it of with exceeding violence, they renewed agains the woundes of I E s v s, they pulled of with it many particles of flesh, so that the wholl body of Christ, in every part fleyed and bloody, from the head to the foote seemed to be but one entire and continuate wound.

Weigh well with thy selfe (my soule) the immense goodnes and mercy of God, manifested in these tormentes, behould he that spreadeth the heavens with cloudes, vesteth the greene and pleasant feilds with slowers, and he that liberally bestoweth clothings vpon every creature, behould him I say starke naked. Consider what told, this pretious body, beinge wounded, suffered, when they had not only spoyled him of his garmentes, but his very skin was not enteire, neither were his woundes bound vp, but exposed to the injury of the aire.

If S. PETER, being well clothed could not ouercome the cold of the fore-passed night: What cold doest thou thinke this delicate body suffered being in energy place wounded and all naked?

Then confider how CHRIST was fastened to the Crosse, and what torment he suffered, when the sharp nayles pearced the most sensible parts of his tender body;

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Weigh with thy selfe that the blessed Viragine, which beheld these thinges with her eies, and hearing, the frequent blowes of the mallet, which they iterated in drivinge the nayles into the handes and seet of her Sonne, was not vnsensible, but the heart of the Mother was pearced with the handes and seete of the Sonne.

When CHRIST was made fast vpon the Crosse, presently they lifted it vp, and put it into a hole there before prepared, behold how these wicked torterours of innocet IES vs pricked forward with their owne malice, lett the heavy Crosse fall into the hole with such a violence, that it so much strained his body hanginge only by the nayles, and rent wider the woundes of his handes and seete.

Sweet Sauiour ca there befound a heart fo hard and steely, which is not molified at such a spectacle, when the very stones did cleaue in sunder, as sensible of thy cruell tormentes?

O Lord, the dolours of death compalfed thee round about, the stormes and waves of the raginge sea environmed thee on every side. The waters entred into thy soule, thou didest descend to the deepe abysse, where thou couldst find no sootinge. When thy heavenly Father did forsake fake thee, Lord, what couldst thou expect thine enemies would doe? they cried out against thee, and thy freindes did wound thy heart, thy soule was sad and heavy, neither was there any that would cofort thee.

Lord, from these vnheard-of tormetes. and aboundat latisfactio which thou halt made for my fins, I cannot but acknowledge with all humility the greinioulnes of my heinous transgression, which were the occasions of all thylmiseries. I see thee my King and God fastned upon a wodden Crosse, with two yron nayles; thy pretious and tender flesh to bestretched without any manner of respite. If thou wouldest a little case thy selfe upon thy secte, the weight of thy wholl body enlargeth their woudes: if thou wouldest leave the burthe to thy hads, the weight of it doth likewise rend their woundes; thy facred head could find no rest because thou hadest no other pillowe the the sharpe crowne of thornes.

O virgine Mother howe willingly wouldest thou have embraced him in thine armes, thero to ease and rest himselfe a little. But the armes of the Crosse would not permitt the, upon which, if he would repose the sharp thornes strooke deeper into his head: the troubles of the Sonne were much augmented by the presence

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of the Mother; which no leffe crucified his foule then the Ievves his body to the Crosse.

O sveet I Es w, in one day thou dides carry a double crosse, the one vpon thy body, the other in thy soule, the one of pasfion, the other of compassion, the one pearced thy body with nayles of iron, the other thy soule with nayles of sorrovve. What tonge is able to expresse, what thou didest suffer to see the anguish of thy Deare Mother? vvhose soule thou didest certainly knowve to be crucified together with thee? when thou didst behould her heavy heart, pearced with the sword of forrovve: when with bloody eies thou didst looke vpon her beutifull face', pale and vvan: and didft heare the fightes of her dyinge soule, lamentinge that she could not dye. What didft thou luffer to fee pure fountaines of teares gushinge from her eies, and to heare her pittifull complaintes she made in forrovvinge for thy suffetinges.

Thé consider the seaué vyordes vyhich CHRIST spake vpon the Crosse, to his heauenly Father, sayinge: Pater ignosse illumia nesciunt quid faciume: Father forgiue them for they knovy not vyhat they doc. To the Theese: This day thou shalt be

vvith me in Paradise; To his Mother: Woman behould thy Sonne. To the people he said: I thirst. And to God againe: My God, my God, vvhy hast thou sar saken me. Consummatum est: It is consummate. In to thy hands I commande my spirit.

Ruminate, my foule, with what exceedinge charitie, he made intercellion to his heavenly Father, for his enemics and perfecutours. With what picty and mercy he received the penitent Theefe into his fauour. With vyhat affection he committed his Mother to the protection of his beloued disciple: vvith vvhat ardour he teltified himselfe vehemently to thirst after the faluation of mankind. With vvhat clamour he thundered out his prayer, exprelfinge to the divine Maiestie the greiniousnes of his tribulations. Howe perfectly he fulfilled the obedience, enjoyned to hime by his heauely Father. And lastly hovve he yealded his foule into his bleffed handes.

ford vs a great deale of matter for our infiruction. In the first, vve are taught, to loue our enemies: in the second, mercy tovvardes sinners: in the 3. piety tovvardes our parents: in the fourth, to thirst after our neighbours saluatio: in the sist, vvhen we are oppressed with tribulations, and seeminge as it were to be left of God, to sly to prayer: in the sixth, the vertue of obedience and persequerance: in the seauenth, persect resignation into the handes of God, which is the sume of all persection.

A Meditation for Saterday.

This day thou shalt meditate vpon the pearcinge of our blessed Sauiours side with a speare: the takinge downe of Christ from the Crosse: the lamentations of the women: and other thinges which did occurr about his buriall.

First take notice, how that C HRIST, after he gaue up the ghost upon the Crosse, his enemies much reioyced at his death. But yet there was not an end of their infatiate cruelty, but still their encreasinge malice raged against him being dead. They divided and cast lotts for his garmetes, and with a speare pearced his pretious side.

O barbarous caitifes! ô adamantine heartes! did you thinke those tormentes he suffered before his death were not sufficient, that you would not vouchsafe to spare him beinge dead? what madnes did possesse your soules? lift up your eies and

behold his dead face, his eies sunck, his hanginge head, and his wholl body beinge wan and pale. Although your heartes be harder then adamant, yet let this pittifull aspect molifie them.

Behould the centurian stroock à launce into his facred fide with fuch violece, that the very Crosse did tremble, out of whose fide did gush aboundance of blood and water, for the redemption of all mankind. O river of paradile runinge forth to water the wholl earth! O pretious wound which rather the love thou didest bare to vs finfull men, then the enemies weapon did inflict! O gate of heaven, windowe of paradile, place of rest, tower of fortitude, sanchuary of the iuft, neaft of doues, tombe of pilgrimes, flourishinge bed of the spoule! Haile facred woud, which pearcest deuout heartes, haile rose of incredible beauty, haile pretious stone of inestimable valour, hailedore, through which, lieth open a tree passage to the heart of CHRIST, an argument of his loue, and pledge of eternall felicity.

Consider that in the eueninge, Io-SEPH and NICODEMVS came with ladders to loose and take downe the body of our Sauiour: but the blessed Virgine after all these tormentes, perceiuinge her

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Sonne to be taken from the Crosse, and disposed for the grave, she tooke him whe he was let downe, in her armes, humbly beseechinge that holy company, that they would suffer her to come neere his body, and to bestowe her last kisse and embracinges upon him, which upon the Crosse she could not doe. Which they would not, nor could deny. For if her freindshaddeprived her of him dead, which her enemies did her of him livinge, they had redoubled the anguish of her soule.

When she sawe her Sonne in this case, what greife, what dolours can we immagine she then did suffer? Angels of peace come and lament with this blessed Virgine, lament heaven, lament starres, lament all creatures of the vvorld. She embraced the mangeled body of her beloued Sonne, she hugged him in her armes (for love administred this strength) she thrust her face amongst the thornes to come to kisse his mouth, vvherby she vvounded her face vvith the sharp pricks vvhich she vvashed vvith flovvinge teares;

O sovert Mother, is this thy beloued Sonne? is this he vehome thou didest conceiue with great glorie, and bringe south with great joy? is this that bright mirrour in which thou wert wont to see thy selfe? all that were present did likewise mourne, the other MARIES, which were there mourned, the noble-men lamented, heauen and earth with all creatures mourned with the blessed Virgine.

That holy Euangelist lamented, who often embracinge the body of his deare Master, said: Omygood Lord and Master, who shall hereafter teach and instruct me? with whome nowe shall I confult in doubtfull occasios? vpon whose lapp shall I now rest my selfe? who shall now reueale vnto me celestiall secretes? what suddaine change is this ? yeasterday I rested vpon thy facred brest, where thou didst communicate to me the ioyes and glory of cuerlastinge life, and nowe in recompence of that benefit I embrace thee dead in my armes? is this that countenance which I beheld glorious and transfigurated vpon the mount of Thabor? is this that face which I sawe brighter and more glitteringe then the fun?

And that bleffed finner S. MARY MAGDALEN lamented, who often kiffinge the feete of her Sauiour, faid: O the true light of mine eies, the only remedie and solace of my soule. If I sinne againe, who shall hereafter receive me into fauour? who shall defend me from the ca-

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lee thee dead before me?

Thus this bleffed copany did mourne and lament, wateringe with aboundant reares the body of I E s v s. The sepulchre beinge ready they spiced his holy body with sweet spices, they wrapped it vp in a fine linnen cloth, bound his head with a handkercher, laied it vpon a beere, carried it to the place of buriall and put it into a newe monument.

The monument was couered with a stone, and the face of MARIE obscured with a cloud of forrowe. When there againe she bad her Sonne adue, she then began to be more and more sensible of her solitude. For then she savve her selfe, to be deprived of the greatest good. But her heart remained buried with her treafure in the grave.



A Meditation for Sunday.

His day thou shalt confider and meditate of the descent of CHRIST to lymbus Patrum: his refurrection: divers apparitions to the bleffed Virgine M AR I E: S. MARIE MAGDALENE, and his other disciples: and last of all his glorious

ascension into heauen.

Take notice therfore of the incredible ioy, the Fathers, which were deteined in lymbus, felt at ther cominge of the redeeme vyho came to free them from the darke prison, wherin they were shutt for many thousand yeares. What prayses, what giuinge of thankes did they render to him, vvho had brought them to the longe defired hauen of their saluation?they which retourne from the cast Indies, are vvont to lay, that they thinke all their forepassed labours well bestowed, only for that ioy they finde, the first day of their arrivall into their country. If the banishment of a yeare or tyvo, and the tedioulnes of a little trouble some journy, can breed such joy in men, what will the absence of three or tovere thousand yeares doe fro that pleafant and celestiall country. What ioy thertore doe vve thinke, those holy Fathers had, when they tooke possession of it?

Then consider the excessive joy of the blessed Virgine, when she sawe her Sonne risen from death, when it is most certaine, and vindoubted, that she felt the greatest forrowe and affliction at his ignominious death and passion that could be, herior must needs excell the rest, in his triumphat resurrectio. How great doest thou thinke was her content and pleasure to see her Sonne, whome she greuiously lamented before his death, liuinge, glorious, and attended with a joyfull troop of holy Par triarches, whome he brought a longe with him? What said she? what did she? with what kisses did she salute him? with what affection did she embrace him? what pleafant rivers of teares distilled from her eies? how earnestly did she desire to followe her Sonne, had it been permitted to her?

More-ouer take notice, of the joy of the holy MARIES, particularly of her which stood weepinge, at the Sepulcre of CHRIST, then, when she sawe him whome her soule loued: without doubt she cast her selfe at his feete, when she beheld him livinge, whome she sought amongst the dead.

After his Mother, he therfore appeared to her, who loued him most ardently, and,

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aboue others, fought him most diligently and perseuerantly, to instruct vs that when we looke for God, vve must seeke him

with teares and diligence.

Confider that after this, he appeared to his disciples going vnto Eman, in the habit of a Pilgrime; behould, hove curteoufly he ioyned himselse a companion to them: hovve familiarly he conversed with them: hovve handsomely he diffembled his per-Ion: and after, with what affection he manifested himselfe vnto them, and last of all hove he left their tounges and lippes filled with the delightfull discourse of his Maiestie. Let thy discourse and talke, be like these disciples, as they travailed in the vvay, of the love and passion of our blessed Sauiour; and I dare be bould to fay, that he vvill not deny vnto thee his facred preience.

In the mystery of our blessed Sauiours ascension, first consider that he deserred it for forty dayes, that in the meane time often appearinge to his disciples, he might instruct them, and with them discourse of the kingdome of heaven. For he would not forsake them by ascendinge into heaven, before he had disposed their mindes to ascende with him spiritually.

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96 Hence we may note, that those are of. ten depriued of the corporall presence of C HR I S T, and of sensible devotion, vyho with the winges of contemplation fly vp to heauen and feare no danger. Wherin the divine providence, wherevith it curbeth & gouerneth the elect, doth vvonderfully manifest it selfe, hovve it stregthneth the vveake, exerciseth the stronge, giueth milke to little ones, prepareth itronger meat for great ones, comforteth some, afflicteth others, and to conclude accomodates himselfe to all accordinge to their severall degrees in their spirituall profitt. Wherfore he that is roborated by divine comfort, ought therfore not to presume of him selfe, seeinge this sensible confolation, is but the meat for infirme ones, and a great figne of vvcaknes: nor he that is exercised by affliction, oughttherfore to be deiected, seeinge temptation is for the most part, a testimony of a valiant minde.

CHRIST ascended up to heaven, in the presece of his disciples, that they might be vvittnesses of this mystery, of vvhich they vvere eie-beholders, none can give better testimony of God almighties deedes then he which hath learned them by experience: wherfore he that would certainly

of Meditation. tainly knowe, how good, howe sweet, and mercifull he is towardes his, and what is the force and efficacy of his divine grace, loue, prouidence, and spiritual consolatios: lett him aske those, which indeed haue had experience of them, for they, and only they, will give him the best instru-Ctions and fatisfaction.

More-ouer CHRIST would ascend. his disciples lookinge vpon him, that they might profecute him with their cies and spirit, that they might have a cordiall fealinge of his departure: that in his ablence, they might feare to remaine alone, and that they might the better dispose themselues to receive his holy grace. The Prophet HELISEVS, when HE- 4. Reg. 2. LIAS was to be taken and separated from him, defired that he would give him his spirit, HELIAS made answere: Rem quidem difficilem postulasti, attamen fi Videris me, quando tollar à te , erit tibi quod petisti; Si autem non videru, non erit. Thou hast asked a hard thing: neuer the leffe if thou ice me when I shall be taken from thee, thou shalt have what thou hast asked: but if thou see me not, thou shalt not haue it.

In like manner they shall be heires of the spirit of CHRIST, whome loue doth

doth cause to mourne, for his departure: to whome his absence doth seeme greuious, who earnestly whilst they live in this banishment, desire his holy presence. Such a Sain& was he that saied: thou art gon my comfortour, without any care of me, at thy departure thou didest blesse thine, and I sawe it not; the Angels promised, that thou shouldest retourne againe, and I heard them not. Who is able to expresseor understand the solitude, trouble, cries and teares of the bleffed Virgine, of his beloued disciple, S. MARIE MAGDA-LEN, and the other Apostles: when they sawe Christ to be pulled from them, who together with him carried vp their affectionate heartes? and yet notwithstandinge it is faied of them, that they retourned with great ioy into Hierusalem: the fame love and affection which made them bewaile the visible losse of their beloued Lord and Master, did likewise cause that they congratulated eatch other; much reioycinge at his glory, for it is the nature of true loue, not so much to seeke the comoditie of it selfe, as the honour and comodity of the person that is beloued.

Last of all to close up this meditation, it is less to vs to consider, with what glory, with what ioy, this noble conquerour was brought

brought into that heavenly citty: what solemnities were then instituted in the glorious Paradise, howe magnificently was he entertained by those celestiall citizens? what a delightfull spectacle was it, to see men accompanied with Angels, to goe in procession, and to sett vpon those seares, which for many thousand yeares, were vacant. But a most rauishing sioy it was, to behold, the sacred humanity of Christs I s v s, farr transcending all others, to set at the right hand of his eternall Father.

All these thinges are worthy of thy attentiue consideration, that thou maiest learne, that the labours thou doest vndergoe for the loue of God, are not spent in vaine, therfore he that humbled himselfe vnder all creatures, it was requisite that he should be exalted about all; that the louers of true glory may trace this path, they must expect if they desire to be about all, that first they be subject to all, even their inseriours.



CHAP.

Of six thinges necessary to prayer.

HESE are the exercises and meditations (Christian Reader) wherwith euery day thou Maiest feed thy foule, which if thou doest rightly vie, thou wilt neuer want matter, to sinteres buely thy minde denoutly. But thou must note, that meditation, if it be well perforfor medi- med, ought to consist of six partes. Some of which goe before, others followe mentall prayer.

Preparatian.

tation.

First before we apply our selues to meditation, it is necessarie, that our minde and soule be diligently prepared to this boly exercice. As the stringes of an instrument, except they be before-hand well tuned, will neuer make a pleasant melody.

Reading.

After preparation ought to followe the readinge of some holy mystery, accordinge to the distribution of dayes in the weeke, which in younge beginners is cheifely necessary untill with continuall

of Meditation. vse and custome, matter of meditation offereth it selfe vnto their memories. Then insist upon the matter to be meditated vpon. To meditation we must ioyne de- Meditauout and syncere giuinge of thankes to sion. God for all his benefits: then a generall Gininge oblation of all the life of CHRIST, for ker. recompence of any benefit, and our owne Ollaies. workes to the honour and glory of God. Last of all, petition, which is cheifely cal- Petition. led prayer, wherin we desire all things necessarie for our owne saluation, of our neighbours, and the good of the wholi Church.

These six partes are required to mentall prayer, which besides other comodities they minister aboundant matter of meditation, seeing they sett before vs divers fortes of meates, that if one will not relish our spirituall tast, we may fall vpon an other : if we be deficient in one; in an other we may employ our mindes, and kindle our deuotion.

But in euery meditation, neither all these partes nor order is alwayes necessary: although, as I said before, to younge beginners, it is. That they should have a certaine methode, accordinge to which they are to guide them selues, wherfore in that which hath, or shall be faid, my intention

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is not to sett downe, a generall rule, or immutable perpetuall lawes, the violatinge of which should be a fault, but my meaninge is, to introduce, and bringe in younge beginners and nouices into the right way, and methode of meditation: which when they are once in vse, experience, but especially the holy Ghost will better informe them.



CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the preparation necessarie to prayer.

T will not be besids our purpose to hadle all these partes seuerally, we will therfore first beginne with prepara-

tion which we did put first.

He therfore which goeth about to meditate, after he hath placed his body after a decent manner, either kneelinge, or standinge, or composinge himselfe in manner of a Crosse, or prostratinge himselfe vpon the ground, or littinge, if infirmitie or necessitie doth so require, lett him first signe himselse with the signe of the Crosse, then let him recollect the dispersed powers of his soule, especially the imagination, and sequester it from all temporall and transitorie thinges. Lett him eleuate his vnderstandinge to God, consideringe his diuine presence, with that due reuerence and attention as is requisite, and lett him imagine God Almightie himselse to be presente in his soule, as in verie deed hee is.

¥04 Bl. Alcantara,

If it be the morninge meditation, after a generall act of contritio, for his fins, let him make to God a generall confessio: if in the eueninge let him examine his conscience, concerninge all his thoughtes, wordes, and workes, of that day: of the forgetfulnes of God Almighne his benefits, and of the sinnes of his former life, humbly prostratinge himselfe in the fight of the divine Maiestie in whose presence, he now is after a particular maner, sayinge the wordes of the Patriarch ABRAHAM: Loquar ad Gen. 18. Dominum meum, cum sim puluis & cinis: Shall I speake to my Lord, seeinge I am but dust and ashes. And singinge this Psalme. To thee haue I lifted vp mine eies, yvhich dyvellest in the heavens. Behould as the eies of seruantes, are on the handes of their masters. As the eies of the handmaide on the handes of her mistresse: so are our eies vnto our Lord God vntil he haue mercie on vs. Haue mercie on vs, ô Lord, haue mercie on vs: Glorie be to the Father, CC.

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Cor. 2.

And because we are not able of our felues to thinke any good, but all our sufficiencie is from God, and because none can fay Lord I E s v s, that is to fay, call vpon the name of IESVS, without the holy Ghost, to thee therfore, ô holy Ghost, doe I turne my selfe, with teares imploringe

of Meditation. 105 thy affistance: Come holy Ghost send fourth from heaven the glitteringe beames of thy true light: Come Father of the poore, come giver of revvardes, come light of our heartes, (vveet comforter, sveet guest of the soule, sveet refreshinge, rest in labour, temperature in heat, in mourninge a gratefull folace, ô blessed light, replenish the heartes of the faithfull. Then followeth the prayer. Deus qui corda fideliu, &c. These beinge said, he shall pray to God to bestowe vpo him his divine grace, to assist at this holy exercise, with that attentio.duc recollection, feare and reuerence, befeeminge so great a Maiestie, hubly beseechinge him, so to passe ouer this time of holy prayer, that he may retourne from thence fortified with new feruour, to execute what soeuer shall belonge to his holy seruice, for prayer which beareth not this fruite, is luke-warme, imperfect and of no moment before God.



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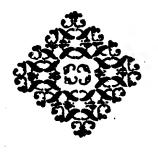
CHAP.

Of Readinge.

FTER a due preparation, followeth readinge of those thinges which are to be meditated vpon. Which must not be too hasty but mature, serious and quiet, to which the vnderstandinge must not only be attentive, to vnderstand those thinges which are red: but also, and cheifely the will: that those thinges which are understood may give a spirituall gust and sealinge. When he salleth vpon any place, which much moueth his affection, lett him there paule a while, that in his heart it may cause a greater impressió. He must also beware not to spend too much time in readinge therby to hinder meditation, it being a more fruitefull exercise, for-asmuch as thinges attentiuely considered pearce more inwardly, and produce greater effects. If peraduenture What to some time it happeneth the mind so to be doe vobé dispersed, that it cannot settle it selfe to the mind # dolle- prayer, then it is better to infift a while longer in readinge, or to ioyne readinge to meditation, or after the readinge of one point

of Meditation. point to pause vpon that a while, then after the same manner to proceed to the others. Although the vnderstandinge tyed to certaine wordes which are red, cannot so freely be carried into diverse affections, as when it is free from this bond.

It is oftentimes very profitable for a Inputman to vie some violence to himselfe, to sing out expell his vaine and triflinge fancies after fitable the example of the Patriarch I A COB, thoughts manfully to wraftle against them, perseueringe vnto the end, after which fight, the victorie beinge chesined victorie beinge obteined, God doth for the most part, give greater devotion, or more pure contemplation, or some other supernaturall gift, which he neuer denieth, to those who faithfully fight in his cause.



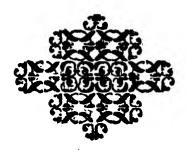
CHAP. VIII.

Of Meditation.

FTER readinge followeth meditation. Which is some times of such thinges as can be represented to our immaginatio: as the life and passion of our blessed Sauiour: the latter iudgment, hell, and the Kingedome of heauen. Sometimes of such thinges as are subject rather to the vnderstandinge, then immagination, as the consideration of God Almighties benefits, his bounty, elemency and other persections which are in God.

These meditations are called, the one intellectuall, the other immaginarie. Both which in these exercises are to be vsed after a different manner, as occasion requireth. When the meditatio is immaginarie, so that the thinge meditated vpon, hath, or ever had, any actual existence or beinge, vve must so frame and represent it to our fancie, as though vve vvere present in the same place, and savve vvith our eies those thinges, vvhich there vvere done. This representation vvill make the consideration

of Meditation. of these thinges, more viuacious, and cause a greater impression in our soules. For if our immaginatio can comprehend wholl citties and countryes, with lesse difficulty, can it comprehende one mysterie. This helpeth much to the recollection of the minde: this will retaine the same busied in it selfe, as a bee in the hyue, where she worketh and disposeth all things diligently. But in these thinges a moderatio must be vsed, for to run with a violent immagination to Hierusalem, to frame to the fancie those thinges which are to be meditated there, doth oftentimes hurt the head. Wherfore it is good to abstaine from immoderate immaginations, least nature oppressed with too violent apprehensions, becomes infirme and weake.



CHAP. IX.

Of givinge of thankes.

FTER meditation followeth giuinge of thankes, the occasion of which must be taken from the matter meditated vpon; for example if the meditation be of the passion of our Sauiour, we must give thankes vnto him that, he hath redeemed vs from so great tormentes. If of finnes: that, with longanimity he hath expected vs to doe pennance. If of the miseries of this life: that he hath preserved vs from the greatest part of them. If of death: that hetherto he hath defended vs from the perills of sodaine death, and hath fauourably granted vs time of penance. If of the glory of Paradise; that he hath created vs to that end, that after the stormes and troubles of this present life, we should enioy eternall felicity, after this manner, we are to proceed in other meditations,

of Meditation.

To these benefits, we may ioyne the others which we handled before, to with the benefits of our creation, conseruation, redemption and vocation. As much as in vs lieth, lett vs giue him thankes that he hath created vs after his owne image and likenes, that he hath giuen vs a memorie to remember him, an vnderstandinge to know him, and a will to love him. That he hath comitted vs to the custodie of Angels, that by the help of our Angel Guardian, he hath exempted vs from many daungers, preferued vs from many mortall finns, defended vs from death and malice of the deuill, while we were in this case (which was no lesse, then to free vs from cuerlaltinge death, to which by finn we were obnoxious.) That he would vouchfafe to assume our nature vpon him, and for our sakes suffer a most ignominious death. That we were borne of Chri-Itian parentes; that we were regenerated by Baptisme: that in this present life he hath promised grace, and vnspeakable glory in the world to come: that he hath adopted vs for his Sonnes: that in the Sacrament of confirmation, he hath fortified vs with stronge weapons to fight against the world,

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the flesh, and the deuill; that he hath given himselfe to vs in the Sacrament of the aulter: that he hath left vnto vs the Sacramet of penance, to recouer that grace which was lost by mortall sin. That he hath vifited vs dayly with good and holy inspirations: that he hath given vs grace to per-

seuer in holy and pious exercises.

After the same methode we must proceed in accountinge other God Almighties benefites, as well generall as particular, and for all publicke or private, manifest or fecret, giue him thankes: and we must inuite all creatures celestiall and terrestiall to bare vs company in this holy exercise: singinge the songe of the three children: Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino: laudate & superexaltate eum in sacula, &c. And Pfal. 102. the Pfalme: Benedic anima mea Domino: & omnia que intra me sunt, nomini sancto eiu: Benedic anima mea Domino : & noli oblinisci omnes retributiones eius. Qui propitiatur omnibus iniquitatibus tuis : qui sanat omnes infirmitates tuas. Qui redimit de interitu vitam tuam: qui coronat te in misericordia & miserationibus. My soule blesse thou our Lord; and all thinges, that are with in me, his holie name. My soule blesse thou our Lord: and forget not all his retri butions. Who is propitious to all thine iniquities: who healeth

of Meditation. all thine infirmities. Who redeemeth thy life from deadly falling: who crowneth thee in mercie and commiserations.

CHAP. X.

Of Oblation.

YORDIALL thakes beinge giuen to God, presently the heart breaketh naturally into that affection, which the Kingly Prophet D AV I D felt in himselfe when he said : Quid retribuam Pfal. 1150 Domino: pro omnibus que retribuit mihi? What shall I render to our Lord: for al thinges that he hath rendred to me? Which defire we shall in some sort satisfie, if we offer to God what soeuer we have. First therfore we must offer to God our selves, for his perpetuall seruates, wholly resigninge our selues to his holy will, howsoeuer he shall please to dispose of vs. We must likwise direct, all our thoughtes, wordes and workes, what so ever we shall doe or suffer, to the supreme honour and glorie of his sacred Name. Then we must offer to God the Father, all the merits of his only be-

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Dan: 3.

potten Sonne, all the labours and forrower he did vndergoe in this milerable world, to fulfill the will of his heauenly Father, beginninge from his natiuitie, and hard manger, to his contumelious crucifyinge and giuinge vp the ghost: for as much as these are all the goods and meanes, wherof in the newe Testamet, he hath lest vs heires; wherfore, as that is no lesse our owne, which is giuen vs freely, then that we get with our industrie: so the meritts of Christ, which he hath freely bestowed vpon vs, are no lesse our owne, then if we had got them with our sweat and la-

Bl. Alcantara,

Hence every man may offer this facred oblation, as the first, numbringe one by one all the labours and vertues of the life of Christ, his obedience, patience, humilitie, charitie, and his other vertues, seeinge these are the most excellent of all oblations, that we can offer to God.

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CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of Petition.

HIS noble oblation beinge well performed, we may securely and confidetly proceed to the askinge of any gifts and graces. First therfore God Almightie is to be prayed vnto, with inflamed charitie and ardent Zeale of his divine honour, for the conversion of all nations. that all people may be illuminated with the knowledge of him, prayfinge and ado. ringe him as the only true and liuinge God. To this end from the bottome of our heartes we may otter the wordes of the Kingely Prophet: Consiteantur tibi populi Deus : confiteantur tibi populiomnes : Let peo- Jah 660 ple, ô God , confeile to thee : let all people confeile to thee.

Then we must pray to God for the Prelates of the Church, the supreme Pastour, Cardinalls, Archbishops, Bishops and other Prelates, that he would be pleased so to gouerne and illuminate them with the light of his heauenly grace, that they may be able to bringe all men to the knowledge and obedience of their creatour.

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We must also pray to God for Kinges and Princes (as S. PAV L E admonisheth) and for all men placed in dignitie, that by their diligent care, their subjects may live à quiet life, well instructed with honest manners, for this is gratefull to God, that willeth all should be faued, and come to the knowledge of histruth.

Then for all the members of his mysticall bodie, for the just that he would be pleased to conserue them in their fanctitie. For sinners, to convert them, from their wicked courles, to the amendment of their liues. For the dead, that he would free them from the expiatinge tormetes wherin they are deteined, and bringe them to

their eternall rest.

We must pray to God, for the poore infirme captiues, band-slaues or others in whatfoeuer tribulation, that for the merits of his Deare Sonne, he would vouchfafe to help, and free them from all their mileries.

After we have prayed for the good of our neighbours, let vs at length intreat for our owne necessities, which discretion will teach euery one in particular (if he be not altogether ignorant of himselfe) what they are. But that we may set doune a methode for beginners, we will lead them into

of Meditation. 117 this path way. First therfore we must pray to God, that for the merits and passion of his only begotten Sonne; he would pardon our fins, giue vs grace to auoide them, and to expiate them with good workes worthy of penance; but especially to implore for help and affiftance against those euill inclinations and vices to which we are most propence, layinge open to our heauenly physition all the woundes of our diseased soules, that with the oyntment of holy grace, he would heale them.

Then let vs aske, for the most excellent vertues wherin the wholl perfection of a Christian man consisteth, for example, faith, hope, charitie, feare, humilitie, patience, obedience, fortitude in aduersitie, pouertie of spirit, contempt of the world, true discretion, puritie of intention, and others like to these, which are placed in the supreme top of a spiritual buildinge. Faith is the prime roote and foundation of a Christian: hope is a staffe to defend vs from all tribulations of this present life: charitie the end of all perfection: feare of God, the beginninge of true wisedome: humilitie is the Bass and ground-worke of all vertues: patience is the strongest armour against the fury of our enemies:

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obedience is the most gratefull oblation to God, wherin man offereth himselfe for a sacrifice, discretion is the eie of the soule, fortitude the hand therof, wherwith it bringeth all her workes vnto persection: purity of intentio directeth all her actions vnto God. We must after pray for other vertues, which may help vs forward in the way of persection:as, sobriety in meate and drinke, moderation of the tongue, custody of the senses, modesty and composition of the outward ma, sweetnes in giuinge good example to our neighbours, rigour and

Last of all we must conclude this petition, with a servent imploringe of the diuine love, and heere to pause a while, so that the cheisest part of time be spent in an earnest desiringe of this grace and sauour, seeinge in the divine love all our selicitie doth consist, to that end this prayer followinge will not be unprositable.

A prayer for the obteininge of distinct loue.

Rant I beseech thee, ô Lord, that I may loue thee with all my soule, with all my heart, with all my strength, ô my only hope, my persect glorie, my resuge

of Meditation. and solace. O my dearest of all freindes, sweet spoule, flowrishinge spoule, sweeter then any hony. Delight of my heart, life of my foule, ioy of my spirit. O bright day of eternitie, cleare light of my bowels, paradife of my heart, originall of all my good, ô my cheifest strength, prepare, ô Lord, in my foule a delicious bed, that accordinge to thy promise, there thou maiest dwell, and make thy mansion. Mortifie in me whatsoeuer is displeasinge to thee, and make me a man accordinge to thine owne heart. Pearce the marrowe of my foule. Wound my heart with the dartes of deare affection, and inebriate me with the wine of loue.

When shall I perfectly please thee in all thinges? when shall I cast from me all thinges contrary to thee? when shall I be wholly thine? when shall I leave to be mine owne? when shall nothinge live in me, but what is thine? when shall I embrace thee with ardent affection? when wilt thou inflame, and consume me with the flames of love? when wilt thou pearce and replenish me on every side, with thy sweetnes? whe wilt thou lay open and manifest to my poverty, that pretious Kingedome which is within me, that is to say, thy sacred selfe with all thy riches? when

and

wilt thou vnite me perfectly vnto thee? when wilt thou transforme and swallowe me vp wholly in thee, that from thee I may neuer depart? when wilt thou remoue from me all obstacles, which hinder me that am not one spirite with thee. O beloued of my soule! O delight of my heart! Looke downe vpon me and heare me, not for my owne merits, but out of thy infinite goodnes: instruct, illuminate, direct, and help me in all, and through all, that I neither speake or doe any thinge, but that which I shall knowe to be gratefull before thy sight,

O my God, my loue, my ioy, my pleafure, my fortresse and my life! why doest
thou not help the poore and needy, imploringe thy assistance? thou which sillest
heaue and earth, why doest thou suffer my
heart to be empty? thou which cloathest
the slowers and lilies of the feildes with
beauty: thou which nourishest the birdes
of the aire: thou which susteiness the least
creature of the earth: why art thou vnmindfull of me, that forgetteth all thinges
for the loue of thee. O immense goodness
I had knowledge of thee too late, that I
loued thee no sooner. O newe and ancient
beauty! O miserable was my state when I

liue I without thy loue! O wretched was

of Meditation.

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my condition, when I knewe thee not! ô
intollerable blindnesse of my heart vvhen
I savv thee not! I sought thee farr abrood,
vvhéthou vvert vvithin me. Yet at length,
though late, I haue found thee, let not thy
mercy suffer me, ô Lord, that euer I sor-

fake or leave thee againe.

And because to have eies to see thee is one of the cheefest thinges that pleaseth thee, Lord, give me the eies of a solitarie turtle, to contemplate thee, give me chait eies full of modestie: humble and amorous: sanctified and vveepinge: attent and dilcreet eies which may understand and performe thy will. Lord give me grace to behold thee with such eies, as thou maiest looke vpon me againe, as thou didest upon Peren, when he denied thee, and didest moue him to bitter compunction for his fins. Looke vpon me as thou didest vpon the prodigall childe, when thou didest runn to imbrace and kisse him: Or as upon the Publican, not daring to lift vp his cies to heaven. Behold me with those eies that thou didest inuite MARIE MAGDALENE to penance, and to wash the feete with teares. Or vvith those eies wherevith the Spoule in the Canticles incited thee to her loue when thou saydest: Quam pulchra es amica Cant, 4, mea, quam pulchra es! oculi tui columbarum! Hovv beautifull art thou my loue, hovv beautifull art thou! thine eies as it v vere of doues.

That my aspect be pleasinge, and that the beautie of my soule be gratefull vnto thee, doe thou I beseech thee bestove the gift of vertues and graces vpon me, to deck and trim my selfe, wherby I may like to gloriste thy holy name for ever and ever.

O mercifull and holy Trinitie! Father, Sonne, and holy Ghost, one only true God, teach, direct and help me in all. O Father omnipotent, I beseech thee by the greatnes of thy immense povver, to confirme and strengthen my memory in thee only, and to replenish it with holy and pious cogitations. O Sonne most vvile, illuminate my small vnderstandinge with thy eternall vvisedome, to know thy euerlastinge truth, and my ovvne mifery. O holy Ghost love of the Father and the Sonne, with thy incomprehensible goodnes make my vvill conformable to thy divine pleasure, inflame it with such a hre of thy holy loue, that no waters which rise from the turbulent feare of euill suggestions, may be able to extinguish it. O holy Trinitie and one God, I would to God I could doe nothinge else but prayse and loue thee, and as much as all thy holy Saintes. I would to God I had the love of

Saintes. I would to God I had the loue of all creatures in me alone, I would with a willinge minde trasferrand tourne it to the loue of thee, although this were nothinge, in respect of what thou descruest. Only thou thy selfe, canst worthily loue and praise thy selfe. Because none else besides thee, is able to vnderstand thy incomprehensible goodnes, and therfore the just poise of loue resideth only in thy sacred brest.

of Meditation.

O bleffed Virgine Marie, Mother of God, Queene of heauen, Lady of the world, Mansion of the holy Ghost, Lilly of purity, Rose of patience, Paradise of pleasure, Mirrour of chastity, Vessell of innocency, intercede for me miserable banished wretch, and bestowe upon me a portion of thy aboundant charity.

O all yea Saintes of God, and yea angelicall Spirits, which burne with a vehement affection of your Creatour, especially yea Scraphins, who inflame both heaven and earth with love, doe not for sake my miserable soule, but purifie it as you did the lippes of Esay from all vice and vncleanes, and set it on fire with the slames of your ardent love, that I may love and seeke our

Lord

Bl. Alcantara. Lord God, restinge and remaininge in him for euer and euer. Amen.

XII. CHAP.

Certaine documentes to be observed about Meditation.

ETHERTO WE have only set downe plentifull matter for me-Aditation, which for the present is verie necessarie, because the greatest part of men, either neglect or disdaine this exercise, because they want sufficient matter to consider vpon; nowe we will briefly handle those thinges which pertaine to the forme and methode of meditation, of which, though the holy Ghost be the principall master, neuer-the-lesse experience teacheth vs, that certaine documétes are likewise necessary, because the way to heaven is cragged and full of difficulties, wherfore ther is need of a guide, without which, many haue gone aftray a longe time from the right path, or at leastwile, have not attained to their defired end, to loon as they expected.

The first Document.

He first Documét therfore is, that we A doe not so adheare to those thinges, which aboue we have digested into seuerall pointes, and times, as that we should thinke it a fault, to fall ypon other thinges, wherin the minde may reape more aboundant fruit, for seeing deuotion is the end of all those exercises, that which cometh nearest to this scope, is alwayes to be accompted best. Which ought not lightly vpon euery occasion to be done, but with a cleare and manifest profit.

The second Document.

W/E must be wary of too many spe-W culations in this exercise, and vse rather efficatious affections of the will, then curious discourses of the vnderstandinge: wherfore they goe not in the right vvay that meditate of diuine mysteries, as though they were to preach them to the people in a fermon: which is rather to diffipate, then recollect the spirit. And to wander abrood, the to be bufied in their owne home. Therfore he that will meditate with fruit to his soule, must come to it, like an humble simple creature, bringinge rather a will disposed to tast these holy mysteries profitably, then acrimony of vnderstandinge to discusse them learnedly. For this is proper to those who give themselves to studdies, not to those who consecrate themselves vnto devotion.

The third Document.

IN the precedent Document we decla-red, how the understandinge is to be moderated and subjected to the will, nowe we will prefix some limits to the will, out of which she cannot straggle without a fault. That therfore she be not too immoderate in her exercise, we must knowe that denotion is neuer to be expressed with the violence of our armes, as some doe thinke, who with costrained forrowe doe wringe out teares and commiseration, while they consider the tormentes of CHRIST IEs v s: for this doth rather dry the heart, the make it capable of divine visitations (as CASSIANVS doth excellently teach) more-ouer this extraordinarie force, doth often hurt the body, and by reason of the burthen, which this violece bringeth with it, the mind is left to nauseous that it feareth to retourne againe to these exercises:when experiece teacheth, that it is the cause of so much

of Meditation 127 much trouble, he therfore that will fruitfully meditate vpo the passion of CHRIST, let him not be too anxious for lensible comiseration, but let it suffice, that he exhibiteth himselfe present to his sufferinges, beholdinge them with a simple and quiet eie, and confideringe them with a tender compassive heart, rather disposed to entertaine that affection which God almighties mercy shall suggest, then that which shalbe wronge out with violence. Which when he hath done, let him not be folicitous nor forrowfull, what other thinges God doth deny or will not giue.

The fourth Document.

IT Ence we may gather what attentio, is to be observed in prayer, wherefore the heart must not be languishinge, remisse or deiected; but quicke, attentive and elevated to heavenly thinges. And as it is necessarie to come to God with such attention, elevation of the minde, and abstraction from sensible thinges; so it is no lesse necessarie to temper sweetly this attention, that it be neither hurtfull to bodily health, nor impediment to extinguish devotion. For when any be so intensive to the matter they meditate upon, without any respect to their insirme na-

ture,

ture, doe oftentimes so dull their braines, that they be vnapt for other exercises. On the contrarie, there are some, to avoid this danger are so remisse and lasy in their attentio, that easily they suffer their mindes to be distracted with other idle thoughtes

These two extreames, that they may be both avoided, such moderatio is necessarie, that the head be not weakened with too violent attention, nor the thoughtes permitted carelessly to wander out of supine negligence, in which thinge, we must immitate a good rider vpon an vntovvard horse, vvhich neither holdeth him in too hard, nor looseth the raines vpon his neck, but guideth him equally, that he giveth not back, nor goeth forward too speedily. So vve must strive in meditation that attention be moderate, diligently resisting euill thoughtes, but not violent vvith anxietic.

We must note also, that, these thinges we here speake of attention, are cheesly to be taken heed of in the beginninge of meditation: for it often happeneth, that, those which are too violent in the beginninge, doe founder in the middest of meditation. As trauailers makinge too much speed in their settinge forth, are tired in the middest of their journy.

The fifth Document.

Mongst all documentes this is chei-A fly to be observed, that when in meditation we cannot presently perceiue that sweetnes of deuotion we expect, not therfore to wax pufillarimous, or leave of from the exercise begun, but patiently with longanimity expect the cominge of our lord : seeinge it beseemeth the excellency of the divine Maiestie: the vility and balenes of mans condition, the importance of the busines we have in hand, to stay a whilebefore the gates of his facred pallace: If he cometh presently after a little expectation, with many thankes let vs with gratitude entertaine this vndeserued fauour: If he maketh longer delaies, let vs humble our selues before him, and confesse that we doe not deserue this grace: Ifhe vouchsafeth not to come at all, let ys bare it patienthy with a quiete mind, and content our selues, that we have offered our selues, with all we have vnto him for a gratefull sacrifice: that we have denied our owne proper wills, resigninge the vnto his Power: that we have crucified all our inordinate appetites: that we have fought against our passions and vices. And finally that we have performed whatsoever was in our power to be done. And although we have not worshiped him with sensible devotion. Yet let it suffice vs, if that we have worshiped him inspirit and truth, as he requireth.

Last of all, let vs perswade our selues, that this is the most dangerous and cheifest to be feared rocke of this present nauigation, and place, wher in the true and faithfull servantes of God are tried, and distinguished from infidells, from which if we shall depart in safety, in all others, we shall have a prosperous successe.

The fixth Document.

This document not much differeth from the former, which not with-standing is equally necessarie, and this it is, that the servant of god must not content himselfe, that he hath selt a little sensible gust from meditation; as many doe, when they have shed a little dry teare, or felt a little molifyinge of the heart, that they have attained to the scope and end of this exercise.

But they are farr deceived, for even as to make the earth fruitfull one little shewer which

of Meditation. which alaieth the dust, is not sufficient, but it must have a great deale of raine throughly foke into the rootes of the plantes, before it can give any hopes of a fruitfull yeare: so the aboundance of celestiall waters, are necessarie to our soules for to make them bringe fourth the fruit of good workes. Wherfore we are not with out cause admonished by spirituals men, that we should spend as much time as possible we can in this holy exercise, and it is better to infift some longe time together, then by fitts. For when the time is short, it wilbe almost all consumed, in quietinge the immagination, and recollecting the heart . and it often happeneth, that whilst we should reape the fruit of our former trouble, meditation is quite broke of.

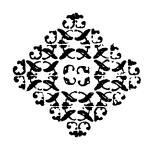
Concerninge the prefixed time for meditation, it seemeth to me, what soeuer is less the two howers, or an hower and halfe, is to little for this exercise, because almost one hower is spent in tuninge the instrument of our soules, repressinge idle and vnprositable thoughts, and recollecting the minde from temporal thinges: and some time also is necessarie to spend in reapinge the fruit of our prayer in the latter end.

Although I cannot deny, but after fome pious

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pious action the mind is better disposed for meditation: for as dried wood quickly burneth, so the mind that is well disposed, is sooner kindled with this celestial fire.

The morninge also is the best time for meditation, because the mind is then most free from fancies, and therfore can with better facilitie apply it self to this holy exercise. But who by reason of the multiplicity of outward affaires, cannot spend so much time, yet at least wise let them, with the poore widdowe in the ghospell, offerr vp to god the small mite of their syncere affection. And no doubt but he who prouideth for all creatures according to their seuerall necessities, will graciously accept it, if their culpable negligence doth not deserve the contrarie.



The seauenth Document.

HE seauenth document is, that he I that is visited with divine consolations in, or, out of prayer, ought to haue a speciall care to spend that time; about other, with fruite vnto his foule, for whileft this prosperous gale doth blowe, he will goe further in his journy towardes heauen in one hower, then other wife, he hath, or shall doe in many dayes. So did the holy Father S. Francis doe of whom S. Bon-AVENTURE Writeth that he had fuch a folicitous care of divine visitations, that whensoeuer vpon the way he was recreated with them, he would either goe before, or stay behind his companion a while, vntill he had digested this divine morsell sent vnto him from heauen. They which are negligent and carlesse to answere diuine visitations, are comonly chastised with this punishment from God, that when they seeke, they will hardly find them.



THE last Document and of greatest moment is, in this exercise of prayer we must joyne meditation to contemplation, seeinge one is, as it were a ladder vnto the other: wherfore it is the part of meditation, with diligent attention to confider and ponderate celestiall thinges, first one, then an other, that at last some pious affection may be stirred up in the soule, like him that with a steele striketh fire out of a flint: but it is the property of contemplation which followeth meditation, to enjoy this kindled fire, that is to lay, to embrace that affection, which with much labour he hath fought and found, in deep silence and tranquillitie of spirit, not with many discourses and speculations of the vnderstandinge, but with a pure simple relation and eie to veritie, hence a certaine doctour faith, that medition doth discouse with labour and small profit, but contemplation vvithout any trouble, and vvith much fruit: the one doth seeke, and the other findeth: the one doth chewe, and the other eateth the meate: the one doth reason and consider the other contemplateth those thinges she loues and tasteth, and in fine the one is

of Meditation. the meanes, the other is the end: the one is the way and motion, the other the tearme of the way and end of the action. From these thinges which we have said, that rule or axiome is very frequent amongst spirituall Masters, which fewe of their schollers doe rightly understand. That is, fine adepto media omnia cessure. The end beinge atteined vnto, all meanes doc cease. For example, the mariner resteth when he hath ariued to his desired hauen. So he that meditates, when by the meanes of meditation he shall come to the rest and sweet gust of contemplation, ought to leave the eragged way of reasoninge and discouse, contentinge him selfe, with the memorie of godalmightie alone, whome he may behold as present to his soule, and quietly enioy that sweet affection, which he shall vouchsafe to bestowe vpon him, whether it be of loue, admiration, ioy, or the like, and the reason is, because the end of this busines consisteth rather in loue, and affection of the will, then in speculations of the vnderstandinge. When therfore the will hath captinated the one, and atteined to the other affection: all reasoninge and speculations of the vnderstandinge are to be left:that the soule may bend all her forces to it, without a confused wanderinge 147 136 Bl. Alcantara,

to the actions of the other powers. Therefore a certaine doctour giueth this counsell to those who perceive the selves to be inflamed with the fire of divine love, that they should quite abolish all other thoughtes and speculations, though never so sublime and subtile, not that they are euill, but because for the present they hinder a greater good. And this is no other, then after we have come to the end, to leave meditation for the love of contemplation.

Which we may doe (to speake particularly of this matter) in the end of every exercise (that is to say) after the petition of divine love, as above said: and that for too reasons, first because it is supposed that the labour of the finished exercise hath produced some fruite of devotio towardes God almighty, as the wiseman saith, melius est similar orationis, quam principium. Better is the end of prayer, then the beginninge. Secondly it is expedient, that, after labour in prayer, the viderstandinge rest a while, and recreate it selse in the armes of contempla-

tion.

Heere let euery one resist what soeuer immaginations shall present them selues vnto his minde, let him still his vnderstandinge, let him sasten his memorie strongly vpongod, consideringe that he is placed in his holy presece. But let him not adheare to any particular contemplation of God, but only content himselfe with that knowledge, which faith hath ministred vnto him and to this let him add his will and affection, seeinge this is only that which embraceth God, and in which the wholl fruite of meditation consisteth. The weake vnderstandinge is little able to conceiue, or

comprehend any thinge of God, but the will can loue him verie much.

Let him therfore rouze vp himselfe from teporall thinges, and let him recollect himselfe with in himselfe (that is to say) to the centre of his soule, where is the lively image of god, here let him harken attentively as though he heard God almightie speakinge from a high tutret, or as though he held him sast being present in his soule: or as though there were no other persons in the world, besides God and him-selfe.

Nay I say more, let him quite forget him selfe, and those thinges which he doeth: for as one of the ancient holy Fathers saith, prayer is then every way compleat, when he that prayeth doth not consider that he is before God in prayer. And this is to be done not only in the end of the exercise, but in the middest and in everie

vpon

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part of meditation. For as often at this spirituall sleepe shall sweetly oppresse any one (that is to say) when the understadinge is drowned as it were in a sleepe, (but the will watchinge) let him quietly enjoy this delicate meate as longe as it shall last.

But when it is digested, let him retourne againe to meditation, in which we must behaue our selues like a gardiner, who, when he wattereth a bedd of his garden, after he hath once sprincled it with water expecteth a while, untill it be drunke in, then sprincleth againe, that at last it may throughly wett the earth, That it may become more fruitefull. But what the foule cast into this heavenly sleepe, and illuminated with the splendour of this eternall light, doth enjoy! what facietie, what charitie, what internall peace! no tongue is able to expresse: this is that peace which exceedeth all vnderstandinge, this is that felicitie, a greater then which cannot be immagined in this vale of miserie: there are many to inflamed with this fire of divine love, that their interiours, at the verie memory of this bleffed name without any meditation at all before, doe rest in joy.

These need no more consideration or discourses, to loue god, then a mother nee-

of Meditation. des motiues to loue her child, or the bride her husband. Others there are so absorped in God, not only in prayer, but also in outward busines, that they wholly forget the selues, and all creatures for the love of him. neither are these effects of divine love to be admired, freinge worldly loue caufeth often times greater matters in the mindes ofmen, that it makes them madd. What shall we attribute lesse esficacie to grace then vnto nature and sin? When therfore the foule shall feale this operation of diuine loue, in what part of prayer foeuer it happeneth, let him neuer refuse it, although he spend all the time of this exercise in it without any manner of consideration at all of that point, he purposed to meditate vpo(except he be specially obliged vnto it.) For as faint AVGVSTINE faith vocall prayer ought to be left, if it hurteth deuotion, so meditation ought to be differred if it hurteth contemplatiou. But as it is necessarie to leaue meditation for this affection, and to ascend from the lesser to the greater: so often times this contemplation is to be left for meditation, when it is so vehement, that the corporall health, receiveth some domage therby. This oftentimes happeneth to those who taken with the pleasure of this dinine sweetnes, giue them selues too



THE



THE SECOND PART.

DEVOTION

THOSE THINGES
WHICH THERVNTO

CHAP. I.

VV hat is devotion.

MONGST all the troublfome difficulties, to which they who frequent the exercises of prayer and meditatio, are subject, none is greater, then that which they suffer from the desect of deuotion, which often selt in prayer.

Denotion prayer. For if they haue this, nothinge is makern more sweet, nothinge more pleasant, noges easy, thinge more casie, then to insist to prayer and meditation. But it that be wantinge, nothinge more hard, nothinge more difficult, nothinge more burthensome then to pray. Wherfore leeing we have already spoken of prayer, meditation, and the methode to performe it. Nowe it will not be besides our purpose to treate of those thinges which partly promote, and partly hinder and extinguish deuotion in the mind of man. As also to lay open the temptations which are obuious to thole who frequent these pious exercises, and last of all to annex some certaine documentes, which may not a little auaile to the vvell performance of this busines. We will therfore beginne from the definition of deuotion: that it may manifestly appeare what a pretious margarite it is, for which vve vvarr.

Deuotion, as S. T HOMAS faith, is a vertue vvhich maketh a man prompt and readie to euerie vertuous deed, and stirringe him vp to doe vvell. vvhich definition euidently shevveth the necessitie and vtilitie of this vertue, as conteininge more in it, then any man can immagine.

of Meditation. For the better understandinge of this, vve must knowe, that the chestest impediment that hindereth vs from leadinge a vertuous life, is the corruption of humane nature, proceedings from finne, which bringes with it a vehement inclination to vice, and a great difficultie to doe vvell; this make the vvay of vertue cragged and troublesome, although in it selfe considered, nothinge in this vvorld, is so seveet, so

louely, so beautifull.

The divine wisedome hath ordeined the help of deuotion, as a most conveninient remedia to ouer-come this difficultie: for as the north wind diffipateth clouds, and maketh a cleare skey, so true deuotion expelleth from the mind, the tediousnes of this way, and maketh vs with alacritie prompt to pious actions. This vertue doth to farr forth obteine the name of vertue, that likevvise it a speciall gift of the holy ghost; a heavenly devve, an assistance obteined by prayer, vvhose property is to remoue all difficulties happeninge in prayer and meditation: to expell tepiditie: to minister alacritie in the diuine seruice, to instruct the vnderstandinge: to roborate the will: to kindle in our heartes heauenly loue: to extinguish the flames of valavvfull desires: to ingendre a hatred and and loathinge of sinne and all transitorie thinges: and last of all to him that possessent it, to insuse a newe feruour, a newe spirit, a newe mind, and newe desires to doe well. For as S A M P S O N as longe as he had his haire, did exceede all men in strength: but when that was cutt he was as weake as others. So the soule of euerie Christian recreated with the help of deuotio, is stronge and valiant. But when it is depriued of it, it becometh infirme and weake.

But aboue all the prayses, which can be heaped vpo this vertue, this is the chessest, that although it be but one only vertue, yet it is a prick and motiue to all: they therfore that desire, to walke in a vertuous way must get this for a spuer, for without it, he will neuer be able to rule his rebellious

flesh.

Hence it manifestly appeareth, in what the true essence of deuotion doth consist, not in tendernes of heart, or abcundance of consolations wher with they which meditate are often recreated except a prompt alacritie of the mind to doe well be therwito adioyned: especially seeinge it some times happeneth, the one to be found without the other, God almightie so disposinge for the triall of his servates. Though I can not denie. But that these consolations doe

of Meditation. often proceed from deuotio and promptitude of the minde to doe well, and on the contrarie, that true denotion is not a little augmented by the same consolations and ipirituall guits. And therfore the feruantes of God may lawfully defire and aske the not for the delight they bringe with them, but because they doe greatly increase deuotion which maketh vs with alacritic to apply our selues to vertuous actios, which the Kingly Prophet testifieth of himielte sayinge: Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum: I haue runne the wayes of thy commandementes when thou hast enlarged my heart, that is, when thou hast recreated me with the sweetnes of thy consolations which are the cause of this my readines.

Now let vs treat of the meanes, wherby this vertue is to be atteined vnto, which will bringe no small profit with it, for seeinge it is the spurr to all other vertues, to set downe the meanes, wherby it is to be obtained, is no other thinge then to prescribe the meanes to get all other vertues.

In what denotion confifteth.

K CHAP.

II. CHAP.

Nine meanes or helpes wherey this vertue of denotion may be atteined Vnto, Vvith the least difficultie.

Continuance of exercise belpetb denotion.

Custodie

of the

beare.

THE thinges which promote deuotion are many, of which we will handle a fewe.

First, it helpeth much deuotion: if those exerciles be vndertaken with a generous resolution, ready to vndergoe what difficulty loeuer shall occurr, for the obteininge of this pretious margarite. For it is certaine, that nothinge is excellent which is not difficult, of which kind is denotion,

especially in beginninges.

Secondly, a diligent custodie of the heart from every vaine and unprofitable cogitation, from affections, strange loue, and turbulent motions, doth much promote deuotion. For it is cuident, that eucrie one of these, is no little hindrance, sceinge this vertue cheifly requireth a quiete heart, free from all inordinate affection, and so well composed as the stringes of a well tuned instrument.

Thirdly,

of Meditation. Thirdly, custodie of the senses : espe- custody cially the eies, tongue, and eares, sceinge by of the these the heart is much distracted. For those thinges which enter in through the cies and cares, doe straine the minde with diuers imaginatios, and colequetly disturbe and trouble the peace and tranquility of the soule. Wherfore one not without cause faied, that he that meditateth must be deafe, blind, and dumbe. For by how much leffe he wadereth abroade, with greater recollection, will he reioyce at home.

Forthly, solitude helpeth devotion solitude. much, for it doth not only remoue the occasions of sinne, and take away the causes which cheifly disturb the heart and senses, but it maketh a solitary man, to rouze vp himselfe from temporall thinges, to be present to himself and converse incessantly with God. To which the opportunity of the place doth admonish, which admit-

teth no other societie.

Fifthly, the readinge of spirituall readinge bookes doth not a little nourish deuotion, of friribecause it administreth matter of conside- booker. ration, abstracteth the minde from all thinges created, stirreth vp deuotion, and causeth that a mã doth sooner adheare to the consideration of those thinges, which in readinge offered him a more pleafant

148 Bl. Alcantara, tast, that, that wher with the heart aboundeth may oftner occurr to his memorie.

Coutinuall memory of Godo

Sixthly, continuall memory of God almightie, and dayly immagination of his facred presence, that alwayes thou art in his fight, with a frequent vse of aspirations which S. AVGVSTINE calleth iaculatorie prayers. For these doe gaurd the pallace of the mind, conseruinge deuction in her feruour: that a man is alwayes willinge to pious actions, and ready to holy prayer: this document is one of the principall instrumentes of a spirituall life, and the only remedy for those, who have neither time nor place with opportunity, to infift to longer prayer and meditation, and they which doe thus bestowe their labour to frequent aspirations, will in a short time profit much.

Persene-Yance. Scauenthly, persenerance in good exercises, that so times and places be duely observed, especially morninge and eveninge, as sittest times for prayer.

Corporall austerities. Eighthly, corporall abstinence and austerities doe much help deuotion: fastinge from meate: a frugall table: a hard bed: haire cloth: discipline, and the like. As they originally proceed fro deuotio of the minde: to they doe not a little cherish, conserue and nourish the roote from whence they springe,

fpringe, which is deuotion.

Latty, workes of mercy are a great VVerker fpurr vnto deuotion, because they increase of mercy. the confidence we have to appeare before God, and to be presented before his sacred

Maiestie: they doe accopanie our prayers: and finally they merite that they be sooner heard of God, especially seeinge they pro-

ceed from a mercifull heart.



K 3 CHAP.

III. CHAP.

Nine impedementes of deuotion.

S there be nine thinges which doe promote deuotion, so likwise La there be nine impedimentes that doe hinder the same.

Veniall finns.

The first impediment of deuotion is, sinnes not only mortall, but also veniall, for these although they doe not quite abolish charitie, yet at least wife they diminish the feruour of it, and consequently make vs leffe apt vnto deuotion. Wherfore with all diligence they are to be auoided, not only for the cuill they bringe with them, but also for the good which they hinder.

Secondly, remorfe of conscience proceedinge from fins, when it is in extreames because it doth disquiete the minde, weakeneth the heade, and maketh a man vnht for ractes of vertue.

Anxiety

Remorse.

of con-

science.

Thirdly, anxietie of heart and inordinate ofheart. sadnes, for with these, the delight of a good conscience and spirituall joy of the inward minde, can hardly fute and agree.

Fourthly, too many cares which doe

of Meditation. disquiere the mind, like the Egiptian pre- caes of fects who did oppresse the children of the mind. I SRAEL with too immoderate labours: nor will euer fuffer them to take that spirituall repose, which they should have often had in prayer. Yea at that time aboue others they disturbe the mind, endeauoringe to seduce her from her spirituall exercise.

Fiftly, a multitude of affaires, which Affaires. take vp our whole time, suffocates the spirit, scarce leavinge for a man a moment to employ in Godalmightie his seruice.

Sixthly, delightes and pleasures of the Delight senses, for these make spirituall exercises of the vnsauoury, and a man vnworthy to be sesses. recreated with heavenly confolations, for as faint BERNARD faith, he is not worthy of the visitations of the holy ghost that seeketh after worldly solace.

Seauethly inordinate delighte in eatinge Inordiand drinkinge: especially longe and light in lumpteous suppers, which make a man estinge vnapt to spirituall exercises. For when the and drinbody is oppressed with too much meate, kinge. the spirit cannot so freely elevate it selfe to God.

Eighthly curiositie of the senses and curiosity vnderstandinge, as to see sightes and heare of the newe rumours, because these doe spend seuses.

bic-

pretious time, disturbe and ouerthrough the tranquilitie of the minde distractinge it with many impertinences, which can be no small hinderance to denotion.

Intermiffion of exercifes.

Lastly, an intermission of our wonted exercises, except when they are not omitted or differred for a pious cause or instancessitie. For the spirit of denotion is delicate: which when it is gone it hardly retourneth againe, at least with great difficultie. For as trees and plantes must be watered in due season otherwise they wither away and perish: so denotion, except it be watered with the waters of holy meditation, doth easily vanish.

These thinges we have set downe breisly, that they may be the better remembred, vse and experience of them will as-

ford a longer explication.



CHAP. IV.

Of the common temptations vvhich for the most part assault those, vvho give themselves to meditations: as also of the remedies against them.

Ow let vs see with what temptations they which frequent, the exercise of prayer and meditation are molested: that we may provide convenient remedies for them. Which be these.

1. The want of spiritual consolations.
2. A multitude of vnprofitable thoughtes.
3. Thoughtes of insidelitie and blasphemy.
4. Fancies in the night. 5. Sleepinesse and drowsinesse. 6. Dissidence of goinge forward. 7. Too much presumption of their owne sanctitie. 8. Inordinate desire of learninge. 9. And indiscreet zeale.

These are the common temptations which doe trouble those which would

leade a vertuous life.

Of

Of the first temptation, and the remedie therof.

VVbat to doe in the time of drinesse of pirit.

o him that wanteth spirituall cosola-L tions, this is the remedie, that therfore he omitteth not his customarie exercises of prayer, although they seeme vnsauouric and of no fruite, but let him fet him felfe in the presence of God, cominge before him as guilty of many greeuious fins, lethim dearch diligently, the corners of his owne conscience, and consider whether or no through his owne default, he hath lost this grace, if so, let him beseech God almighty to pardon him for this finne, admiringe the inestimable riches of his divine patience in toleratinge vs lo longe.

By this meanes he will reape no small fruite from his aridity of spirit, takinge trom thence occasion of profounder humilitie when he considereth his owne malice and peruerfnes in heapinge vp of fin, or of more ardent affection when he feeth God almighties goodnes in pardoninge the same. And although he enioyeth no pleasure at all in his exercises, let him not therfore absteine from the continuation of them, for it is not alwayes necessary, that it should be sweet and sauoury to the pre-

of Meditation. sent tast, which wilbe hereafter profitable. There-Especially when it is often seen by expe- yourdef rience that those who constantly perseuer those who is in their intended exercises, not givinge the time ouer in the time of this aridity, but conti- of drinesse nue them with what care and diligence of prit, possibly they are able, that these I say, de- leane of part from this table recreated with many ther heavenly confolations, and much spiritual vonted ioy, leinge they find nothinge to be omitted on their partes. It is but a small matter to protract prayer for a longe space when it floweth with consolations, but when these are taken away, not to desist, is an admirable act of vertue: for in this humility shineth, patience is eminent, and true perseuerance in good workes, is manifested.

But it is necessary in the time, of aridity, to have a greater care of himselfe, watchinge ouer himselse with greater diligence, to discusse his conscience more sincerely, and to observe all his wordes and actions more accurately. For then when alacrity and spirituall joy (which is the principall oare of this nauigation) is ablent, with greater vigilance the defect of grace is to be fupplied.

When thou findest thy selfe to be in this state, thou oughtest to thinke, as S.

Ber-

156 Bl. Alcantara, BERNARD admonisherh, that the sentinells which did watch thee, are a sleepe, that the walls that did defend thee, are broken downe, and therfore the only hope of lategard to confift in armes, when all is gone which did otherwise protect thee, latery is to be fought with an armed hand. O what deferued glory followeth such a soule, which winneth the triumphant lawrell after such a manner, she highteth a combate with the enemic without either fword or buckler, is valient without helpe, who although she be alone susteineth the wholl battaile, with as much courage, as though she were compassed round about with troopes of auxiliatorie forces.

This is the cheifest proofe, wherby the syncerity, and goodnes of the freindes of God is knowne, wherby the true are seuered from false servantes.

A remedie for the second temptation.

VVhat to
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vnprofitable
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tes.

Gainst the temptation of importune and vnprositable cogitations which are wont to vex those that pray, and disquiet them with no small molestation, this is the remedie. To resist them mansfully, prouided alwayes, that resistance be not

of Meditation. ioyned with too much violence and anxietie of spirit. Seeinge this worke dependeth not so much of our strength, as God almighties grace and profound humilitie. Wherfore when any one is befett with these temptatios, let him confidently tourne himselfe to God without any scruple or anxietie of mind, (seeinge this is no fault or at least a very small one) with great submission and deuotion of heart, sayinge, behould Lord, behould what I am? what other thinge can bellooked for fro this ordure but such filthy sauours? What other fruite can be expected from this earth which thou didest curse in the beginninge of the world, but thornes and thiftles? What good ca it bringe forth, except thou lord doest purge it from all corruptio? this beinge said, let him retourne to cotinue his meditations with patience expectinge the visitation of our lord, who is neuer wantinge to the humble of spirit. If yet the tumoult of these troublesome fancies doth not cease, neuertheless let him still resist constantly, repellinge the force of them to the vttermost of his power. From this perseuerant battaile (beleeue me)he will reape more gaine and merite, then if he had enioyed the greatest consolations in his meditation.

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A remedy for the third temptation.

O ouercome the temptation of blasphomous thoughtes, we must knowe as there is no temptation fo troublesome to a pious mind. So likwise there is none less dangerous. Therfore the best remedie is to contemne them. For seeinge sinne consisteth not in sense, but delight of those thinges we thinke of. But in these there is no pleasure, but rather tortour. Therfore they may chalinge the name of punishment rather then of tinne. And the more vexatio is in them, the further of we are from consentinge vnto any finne, therfore it is best not to feare, but contemne them: seeinge feare maketh them more

A remedie for the fourth temptation.

stronge and violent.

Gainst the temptations of infidelitie, La he who is vexed with such cogitations, on the one fide let him confider the imbecilitie of mans condition, on the other hid the greatnes of the divine power, to whome nothinge is impossible: those thinges which God hath commanded let him alwayes bare in mind; for others let him

of Meditation. neuer busy himselse in searchinge curi- Inconfide. oully the workes of supreme maicitie, ring Gode feeing the least of them doe farr transcend worker humane capacity. Wherfore he that desi-ought to reth to enter in to this fainctuary of Gods be taken. workes, let him enter with profound humility and reuerence, endued with the cies of a simple doue, not of a subrile serpent: and let him bare the mind of a meeke disciple, and notof a temerarious judge, let him put on the shape of achild for fundour lord maketh partakers of his divine fecretes, let him not minde to fearch or knowe the causes of Gods workes, let him shutt the eies of naturall reason, and open the eies of faith. For these are the hades wherwith Gods workes ought to be handled. Humane vnderstandinge is able to comprehende the workes of men, but not of God, seeinge they are not capable of so much light.

This temptation feeinge it is one of the greatest, which doth assault men, and bringeth none, or small delight with it, is to be cured with the remedy of the precedent temptation. That is, to make flight of it, for it cannot staine the soule with any great blemish, because where the will is contrarie there is no daunger of any linne.

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A remedy for the fifth temptation.

Here are some who are troubled with many feares and fancies when they goe to pray in folitary places, remote from the company of men, against which temptation, there is no more efficatious remedie then for a ma to arme himselfe with a curragious mind, perseueringe in his exer cise, for this seare is ouercome with fightinge, not with flyinge: moreouer let him consider, that the deuill nor any other thinge what soeuer else can hurt vs, except God permitts. Let him also consider, that we are compassed about with a custody of Angels, which doe guard vs, as well in, as out of prayer, they affilt vs carryinge vp our prayers to heauen, they help vs to bringe to nothinge the deuiles of our crafty enemie, and to confound all his mischeinous plottes.



A remedie for the fixth temptation.

O ouercome fleepe, wher with fome, that meditate are often molefted: we must consider, that sometime it proceedeth from mere necessity, and then it is not to be denied the body what is its due, least it nesin hindreth what is our right. Some times it prayer arproceedeth out of infirmitie, then he must rifeth take heede not to vex himselfe too much, from a feeinge herein is no sinne at all : but mode- canfe. rately as much as strength suffereth, resistinge it: nowe vsinge some industry, then iome imali violece, that prayer doth not altogether perish, without which, nothinge in this life ca be had fecure, but when it cometh out of flouth, or from the deuill, then there is no better remedy then to absteine from wine, and not to vse water in aboundance, but as much as quencheth his thirst, to pray vpon his knees, or after some other painefull gesture of the body, let him vie discipline or other corporall auiterity to drive fleepe from his eics. To conclude, the remedy of this, and all others is, instantly to implore his affistance, who is ready to give it to all, so they aske it teruently and conitantly.

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merits.

A remedie for the seauenth temptation.

Gainst the temptations of diffidece L and presumption, seeinge they in them selues be contrary, it is requisite to apply divers remedies. Against distidence: let him confider, that we doe not rest vp-Manought on our owne merits, but vpon God altheifly to mighties grace, who is so much the more rely vpos Gods grace willinge to affift man, by how much the more he is diffident of his owne forces, placinge a firme hope in the goodnes of God, to whome nothinge is impossible: the remedy for prelumption is, to confider, that the most euident and certaine argument is, that a man is yet furthest from true sanctitie, when he thinketh himselfe to be neerest.

More-ouer let him looke vpo himselse in the liues of faintes, who nowe raigne with CHRIST, or live yet in this mortall life, as in a lookinge glasse, to which of these he doth compare himselfe, he will see, that he is no more then a dwarfe in respect of a giant, which consideration will not a little suppress his pride.

A remelie for the eighth temptation.

Gainst the inordinate desire of stu- The dinine La die and learninge: it is good to con- prisone fider how farr vertue exceedeth science: doth infiand how much the knowledge of God ceedbuexcelleth humane wisedome. Hence a man mane prumay learne how necessarie it is to bestowe dence. more labour vpon one, then vpon the other. More-ouer the world hath all the excellence that can be defired, but cannot auoyd this misery, that it must end with life. What then more miserable then to feeke after that with so much labour, and expence which so quickly perisheth? If all thinges in the world could be knowne, they are but as nothinge, and therfore it is much better to exercise our selues in the loue of God, the fruite wherof remaineth tor euer, and in whome we see and knowe, all thinges. Last of all, in the day of judgment, we shall not be asked what we haue read, but what we haue done, not how eloquently we have spoken, but how well we have lived.

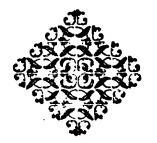
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A remedie for the ninth temptation.

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He cheifest remedie against indiscreet zeale of helpinge others, is, so to attede to the good of our neighbours, that we hurte not our selues: and so to haue a care of the consciences of others, that we neglect not our owne, but in affistinge the it is good to referue so much time, as is sufficient to conserve the heart in devotion and recollection. And this is, as S. PAVLE saith: Ambulare in spiritu: to walke in spirit, that is to say that a man be more in God then in himselfe. Seeinge therfore that the prime roote of all our good vpon this dependeth, we must striue, that our prayer be so profounde and longe, as may conferue the soule in denotion, which energ short meditation is not able to doe, but deuoute and longe.



CHAP. V.

Other certaine admonitions necessarie for spirituall persons.

HE thinge that affordeth greatest difficulty in this spiritual iournie, is, to knowe how to come to God, and to conuerse with him familiarly. Let therfore none dare to enter into this way without a good guide, and well instructed with necessarie admonitions and documentes, of which we will sett downe a fewe, according to our wounted breutie.

The first is, wherby we are taught what end we must aime at in these our spirituals exercises. We must therfore knowe that since to communicate with God almightie of it selfe is most delightfull, havinge no bitternes mixed with it, as the wise man testifieth: hence it cometh to passe that many allured with the pleasure of this admirable and vnused sweetnes (which is greater then can be comprehended) come to God and streetness frequent these spirituals actions, as read and abuse dinge, prayer, meditation, vse of the Sacra-of some.

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CHAP.

Bl. Alcantara.

ment, for the great contet and delight they take in them, so that for the principall end wherwith they are moued, is this admirable sweetnes which they vehemently defire. This is a great errour and many are plunged in it, for seeinge to loue and sceke God should be the cheifest end of all our actions, these love and seeke themfelues, that is to fay, their owne gust and sensible delight, rather then God, which was the scope of the contemplative Philosophie of the gentills. Especially as a certaine Doctour saieth, that this is a kind of auarice, luxurie, and spirituall gluttonie, no less pernicious then carnall. From this errour springeth an other braunch. (To wit) that many judge themselues, and others accordinge to the ebbinge, and flowinge of confolations, so farr that they are persivaded, that a man is more, or lesse perfect by howe much more or lesse, he is visited with diuine consolatios. This is a great mistake.

Against both these temptations this generall doctrine is a remedy: that euerie one piritual must knowe that the scope of all these exer exercifes. ciles, and the cheife end of a spiritual life, is the observinge of Gods comaundemetes, and a perfect fullfillinge of his diuine vvill: to this it is necessarie that our ovvne vill be mortified, that the will of God may the

of Meditation.

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better liue and raigne in vs. Seeinge both thele are directly contrarie the one to the other. But this noble victorie seeing it cannot be obteined vvithout speciall fauour and allurementes of God, therfore vve ought to frequent the exercise of prayer, the better by it (and indeed the only meanes) to obteine this grace, and to bringe this serious busines of our soules perfection to a good and defired end. With this intention vve may confidently defire of God internal consolations, as we have faied before. This did the Prophet Day ID vvhen he saied: Redde mihi Domine latitiam Salutaris tui , & spiritu priucipali confirma me: Giue me,ô Lord, the ioy of thy saluation, and confirme me with thy principall spirit.

Hence it is manifest, what end euerie one ought to prefix to himselfe in these exercises, and howe they should esteeme and measure their owne and othersprofitt: not accordinge to the multitude of flowinge consolations. But accordinge to those thinges they have constantly suffered for God, partly in fulfillinge his diuine pleasure, partly in renouncinge their owne proper wills.

And that this ought to be the end of all our prayer and readinge it appeareth by that one Psalme of the Prophet DAVID

which

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which beginneth: Beati immaculati in via, qui ambulant in lege Domini: Blesled are the immaculate in the way, which walke in the lawe of our Lord. Which is the longest Plalme in the Plalter, notwithstandinge there is not one verse in it, in which there is not mention of the lawe of God, and keepinge his comaundemetes. Which the holy Ghost hath so ordeined, that me may learne to direct all prayer, and readinge to this end and scope. From which they that doc decline, doe cast themselves into the secret inares of the enemy, who with his futtle craft periwadeth them that, that is some great matter which indeed is nothinge, and for this caule men most exercised in spirituall matters doe affirme, the only touchstone of true vertue to be, not that sensible delight which is founde in prayer: but patience in affliction, abnegation of ones owne selte, a syncere and enteire fullfillinge of the diuine will, and finally in a diligent observinge of God almighties lawes and comaundemetes, though I must confess that prayer it leste, and the frequet consolatios that are founde therin, doe not a little conduce and help to the better etfectinge of these thinges fore mentioned.

They which are desirous to knowe how much progresse they have made in

of Meditation. 169 the way of God, let them examine how the figures much they have increased in interiour and by which exteriour humility: how willingly they consecture haue put vp iniuries, with what minde horre they have borne with others infirmities: much yve how they have compationated the imperfections of their neighbours: what confidence they have had in God in the tedious of perfetime of tribulation: how they have bridled #ion. their tongues: how they have kept their heart: how they have mortified their flesh with all vnlawfull delightes, and made it Subject to the spirit. With what moderation they have behaved them felues in prosperitie and aduersitie; With what grauitie and discretion they have gouerned all their actions: and aboue all how dead they have beene to the world, with all its pleasures, honours, and dignities: and accordingly as they have profited in these vertues let them measure their perfection, and not accordinge to the confolations wher with God hath visited them, wherfore let euerie one be sure to beare one hande and the cheifest ouer himselfe in mortification, the other in prayer, seeinge the one can not be atteined vnto without the other.

The

The second Admonition.

S it is not lawfull to desire consolations and spirituall comforts, to that end, that in them we should fett up our rest, but only as they assist vs in our spirituall progresse, much less is it lawfull to wish for visions, reuelations and the like, which to those who are not well grounded in humility, may be a great cause of their veter ruine, neither is there any reason to feare, that those who refuse or reiect the should be disobedient to God, because when it shall please God to reueale any thinge, he will doe it after such a fashion, that he to whome fuch thinges shall be reuealed, shalbe so certaine of them, that he will haue no reason either to seare or doubt, though he should himselfe neuer so much striue against them.

The third Admonition.

WE must have a special care, not to speake to others, those sensible consolations, which God almightie hath bene pleased to recreate vs with all. Except it be to our spiritual directour. Hence it is that, that mellissuous Doctour was wont

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to aduise euery one to have these wordes
written in great letters in his chamber:
Mysecret to myselfe: My
secret to myselfe.

The forwith Admonition.

Oreouer we must alwayes take pre good heede to deale with God, must allyvaiet with much humilitie and reuerence, neuer to esteeme our selues so high in his fauour, in humilias we neglect to cast downe our eies vpon our owne basenes, and to shrowd our winges in the presence of so great a maiestie, as holy S. A v G v S T I N E was wont to doe, of whome it is written, that he had learned to reioyce before God with seare and tremblinge.

The fifth Admonition.

We fay, that he must some counsailed the forme certaine time of the day to recollection. But now besides the ordinarie course, we say, that he must some times sequester himselfe from all busines, and emploimets, as much as is possible, and give himselfe wholly over to devotion, the better to fatt his soule with the aboundance of spiritual dainties, recoveringe his dayly losses, and get-

Bl. Alcantara,

gettinge newe force to goe forward in his spirituall journy. Which although it be not amisse to doe at all times, yet more specially, upon the principal feasts of the yeare: in the time of temptation: after a longe journy: after troublesome busines, which gaue matter of much distraction, that then we exclude from our soules all exteriour thinges, and call our selues back againe to the point from whence we did digresse.

The fixth Admonition.

→ Here be many which be not discreet in their spirituall exercises, when they enion heavenly confolations, and it oftentimes falleth out, that this prosperitie doth expose them to manifest perill, for when God almightie shewreth downe, more aboundantly this celestiall dewe, vpo their ioules, they are io rauished with the sweetnes of it, that they addict themselves without measure to this only exercise: to this end they prolonge the time of prayer, macerate themselues with watchinge and other corporall austerities, so that nature it selfe at length is constrained to sinke under the burthen of such indiscreet mortification. Hence it cometh to passe, that many

of Meditation. abhorre spirituall exercises, and some are not only made by this meanes vnfitt for corporall, but also dull for spirituall labours of prayer and meditation. Wherfore in all these, there is great neede of discretion, especially in the beginninge, when spirituall consolations be more seruent, and commonly who discretion is least. For we must so order our diet that we doe not faint in the middest of our journy. On the contrary there be some so southfull and vndeuout, that vnder the colour of discretio, immoderatly make much of theselues, refusinge the least labour, or trouble. This although it be dangerous to all, but especially to beginners. For as S. BERNARD saith, it is impossible that he should perseuer longe in a spirituall course, who is discreet at first. That whe he is a nouice esteemeth himselse wise, and when he is younge gouerneth himselfelike an old man. Neither can I easily judge which of these, be more dangerous. Except, as THOMAS A KEMPIS faith, the first is more incurable, for whilst the body is stronge and sounde, there may be hopes to cure tepiditie: but when it is once weakened through indiscretion, it scarce euer can be brought to its former feruour.

The feauenth Admonition.

Here is yet an other daunger, more pernicious then the former, which is, that some havinge experience of this inestimable vertue of prayer, that all the truite of a spirituall life doth depend vpon it. Hence they perswade themselues, that in it all is conteined. And that only, that vertue doth suffice for our saluation, which makes them to neglect other vertues, which are likwise the foundations and proppes which doe vphold a spirituall buildinge, which beinge taken away the wholl fabrick falleth to ruine; wherfore they that seeke after this one only vertue with such indiscreet auiditie, the more they labour the lesse fuite they reape. But the seruant of God that expecteth merit and comfort in the way of perfection must not fix his eies so much vpon one only vertue, although it be neuer so rare and excellent, but generally attend to all, as one stringe vpon an instrument maketh no musique, except we strike the rest: so one vertue cannot make a spirituall harmonie in our soules, if the other be wanwantinge, not vnlike a clock, which if there be but a fault in one whele, the others will stand. So it is in a spiritual clock, if one vertue be deficient.

The eighth Document.

These thinges which we have hether to saied, which doe help to devotion. Are so to be taken as preparatories, wherwith a man doth dispose himselfe to God almightie his grace, and behave himselfe mansfully in his holy service, with this caution, that we should not put our considence in them, but in God.

This I say because, there are some which labour to reduce all rules into art, thinkinge that they have atteined to the perfection of that exercise, if they observe exactly the rules therof. But they which put good principalls into practice, vill quicky atteine vnto their desired end, vihich doinge, they care not to reduce grace into art, nor to attribute that to humane rules, which is the gift of God. Here vve say that it is not necessarie to followe these rules, and documentes as dependinge of art, but as instrumentes of grace. Because

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a man vvill learne thus to knovve, that the principall meanes, vvhich one ought to feeke after, is profound humilitie, vvith the confideration of our ovvne basenes, and a great confidence in God almighties mercie. To the end that vve may come to the knovvledge of the one and the other, let vs povvre out teares vvithout intermission, and continually pray, that as vve expect at the gate of humilitie, so vve may obteine by it, all our desires, and perseuere in humble thankes giuinge to the divine bountie, vvithout any trust to our ovvne vvorkes or any thinge that is ours.

AD HONOREM DEL

FINIS.





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